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ABSTRACT

This teaching booklet on Sweden is one in a series of four, developed within the framework of the Associated Schools Project of UNESCO with a view to promoting education for international understanding. The purpose is to enable students to learn more about the lifestyles of their peers in Sweden--their school and family life, aspects of their cultural past, their preferences with regard to food, dress, literature, music, as well as their future aspirations. The booklet has six chapters: (1) Come Visit Our Country; (2) Our Culture(s): The Past and the Present; (3) Who Are We?; (4) Cultural Life in the City and the Country; and (5) Community Life; and (6) World Concerns and the Future. The appendix contains Swedish myths. (EH)

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COME VISIT OUR COUNTRY

SWEDEN

Teaching material prepared within the framework of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project

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1991

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SWEDEN

Teaching material prepared within the framework of the Associated Schools Project

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP France

This material has been prepared by students/teachers from
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in co-operation with the
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and the
Swedish National Board of Education

The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of UNESCO.

ED-92/WS/13 Rev.

Preamble

'... That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war;'

UNESCO Constitution

'... in its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs;'

World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mexico City, 26 July-6 August 1982

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Introduction

The study of other countries and cultures has always been one of the main priorities of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project (ASP) which was set up in 1953 with a view to promoting education for international understanding. Over the years, as the Project has grown from 33 institutions in 15 Member States to a major international network of over 2,500 schools in 101 countries in 1991, so has the number of activities aimed at promoting a better understanding and appreciation of other ways of life, customs and values.

At the pre-school and primary-school levels of education, ***similarities*** between the peoples of the world are often stressed. People worldwide have the same basic needs - food, shelter, health, love and solidarity but these are often provided in many diverse ways and contribute to our rich cultural diversity.

At the secondary-school level of education, whilst ***similarities*** are not lost from sight, studies delve into a deeper awareness and understanding of the numerous and sometimes complex historical, geographical, human, economic, social and cultural factors which make each country so ***unique***.

Furthermore, in studying about other countries and cultures at all levels of education, we are prompted to reflect upon and learn more about ***our own way of life***.

In view of the interest and experience gained in intercultural learning, it is evident that ASP institutions participating in the Project have important contributions to make towards the attainment of the objectives of the ***World Decade for Cultural Development (WDCD)*** 1988-1997 which can be summarized as follows:

(i) acknowledgement of the cultural dimension of development;

(ii) affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities;

(iii) broadening participation in cultural life; and

(iv) promotion of international cultural co-operation.

Consequently, in an effort to enable young people to get to know each other better throughout the WDCD, this new series of booklets entitled 'Come visit our country' has been initiated with four countries: India, Morocco, Senegal and Sweden. Each booklet has been prepared, under contract with UNESCO by the National Commission for UNESCO in each country presented, in close collaboration with ASP students, teachers and educators and to whom UNESCO is most grateful. The guidelines for the booklets were elaborated by the UNESCO Secretariat and submitted for finalization to the Interregional Consultation on an Increased Multiplier Effect of the ASP held in Bangkok, Thailand, in December 1988.

The booklets aim to enable young people to learn more about the life-styles of their peers in different parts of the world - their school and family life, aspects of their cultural past, their preferences with regard to food, dress, literature, music, as well as their future aspirations.

It is hoped that each booklet to be published throughout the Decade will serve as a 'cultural bridge' enabling young people to come into closer contact with each other in order to gain a deeper insight and appreciation of each other's rich cultural heritage and diversity. May these 'cultural bridges':

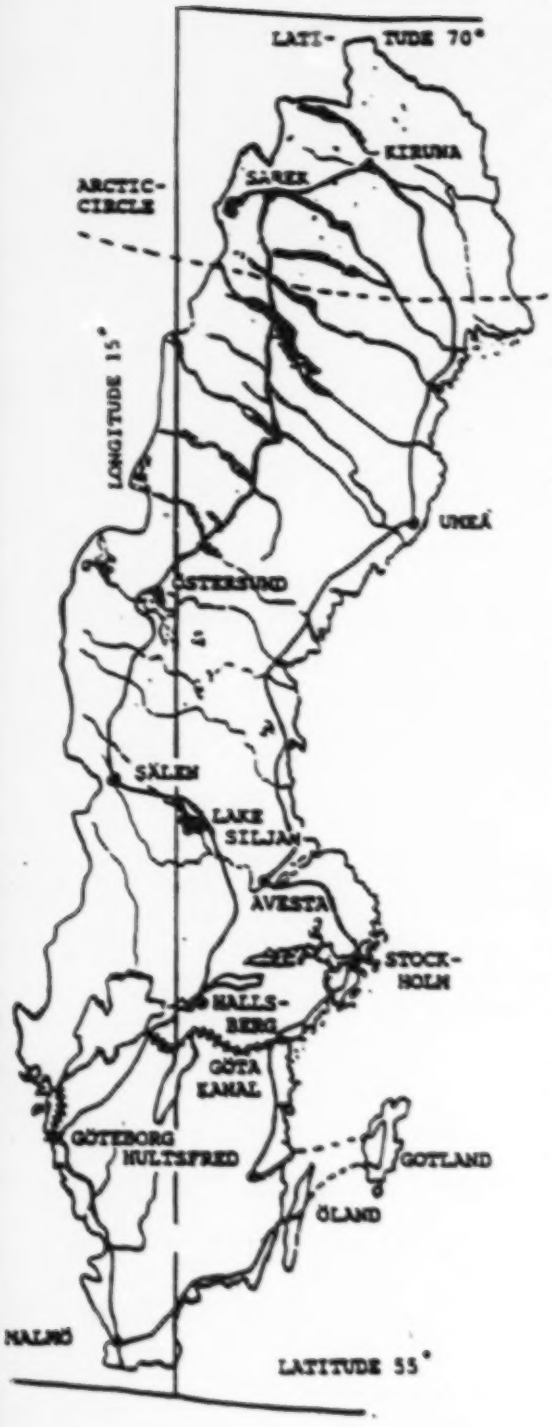
generate dialogue and closer communication as well as the exchange of ideas, concerns and aspirations for the future between the world's youth of today and the young adults of tomorrow;

shed new light on rapidly emerging cultural tendencies, similarities and common bonds among young people worldwide;

lead to closer contact between young people and facilitate reciprocal exchange visits between them; and

lay the foundation for real and lasting peace amongst the youth and peoples of the world.

'Sweden consists of 80 million spruce trees and behind every tenth tree you find a Swede'



Area:	449,793 km^2
Population:	8,526,000 (1.1 million immigrants)
Population density:	19 inh/km^2
Capital:	Stockholm (1,472,000 inhabitants)
Other cities:	Gothenburg (720,000 inhabitants) Malmö (467,000 inhabitants)
Highest mountain:	Kebnekaise 2,114 m.
Longest river:	Klaraälven-Göta älv (720 km)
Largest lake:	Vänern (5,585 km^2)
Language:	Swedish (Sami- and Finnish-speaking minorities)
Religion:	92 per cent belong to the Church of Sweden, a Lutheran church
National day:	6 June
Nationality sign:	S
Main exports:	wood, pulp, paper, cars, machinery, chemical products, iron, steel
Main imports:	oil, cars, machinery, clothes
Currency:	1 krona: 100 öre, approximately US $0.15 (June 1991)
Life expectancy:	men 74 years, women 80 years
Main ethnic groups:	Swedes 95 per cent Finns 2.2 per cent Yugoslavs 0.5 per cent Sami people 0.1 per cent

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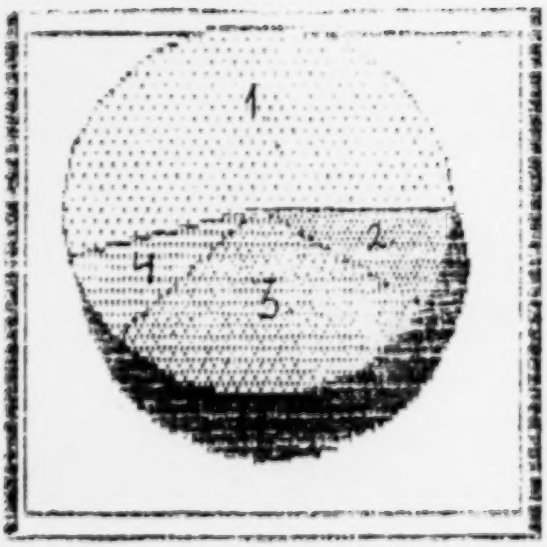
Come visit our country



1. Forests
2. Cultivated land
3. Other land
4. Lakes

I. Come visit our country

We would like to take you on a trip through our country. We hope you will enjoy it and that some day you will be able to come here and experience it yourselves!

As you can see Sweden is a very long country and that means we have big differences in climate in the 1,600 km from latitude 70 to latitude 55. In spite of being far north we have a relatively mild climate. This is due to the Gulf Stream that brings warm water and winds from the Atlantic.

On our way we will pass beautiful countryside - from the plains in the south to the mountains in the north and perhaps catch sight of some of our wild animals. Depending on the season the countryside will look different. Sweden has also 100,000 lakes, often surrounded by thick evergreen pine and spruce forests. In the winter everything is covered with snow, the lakes freeze and you can walk on the ice!

In the spring nature reawakens, migrating birds return, the ice on the lakes thaws, the days get longer and lighter. In the summer wild flowers bloom and we can swim in the lakes. The average temperature is 17° C but can reach 30° C. During this period the sun never sets north of the Arctic circle - the land of the midnight sun. In the autumn the deciduous trees shed their leaves when the first frost comes. We take up our boats from the lake and prepare ourselves for another winter.

Let's start our trip way down south in Malmõ

Malmö still has the atmosphere of a small town with its mediaeval courtyards and old buildings. You find many parks and gardens there and the central area is surrounded by a canal. It is an important industrial town and the gateway to the rest of Europe.

Sweden's west coast and Gothenburg

Sweden's 220 mile long west coast enjoys more sunshine each year than any other place in northern Europe. All along the coast there are lovely sandy beaches and smooth rocks. There are many small fishing villages where you can buy newly caught North Sea fish.

Gothenburg is Sweden's largest port and is also a city of parks. Near the centre you find the Botanical Gardens and a zoo. Liseberg Amusement Park is a place for both old and young. The loop and the roller coaster are the best rides. The Avenue is Gothenburg's main promenade street with outdoor cafés in the summer and trolley buses and trams running all year around. Don't forget to take a trip on a sightseeing boat along the old canal and out into the harbour. One of the old wharves is used for outdoor pop concerts. There are two major arenas in Gothenburg-Ullevi and Scandinavium, which are used for sporting events and also for concerts. North-east of Gothenburg lies Lake Hornborga where many migrating cranes gather in the spring on their way north. Be careful when leaving Gothenburg by car - you might see a ***hedgehog*** crossing the road.

During the summer you can travel from Gothenburg to Stockholm on the ***Göta Canal***, a distance of about 480 km ... . It is the largest of the 15 canals in Sweden and has 58 locks. (It is sometimes called the 'blue ribbon of Sweden'.) You can sail your own boat, take a sightseeing boat or rent an old canal boat. The trip takes about four days. On the way you can fish for ***pike*** (Lat Esox lucius) or ***perch*** (Lat perca perca) when you cross the lakes.

We will drive north to ***Hallsberg***. This is where the north- and west-bound railways meet, so Hallsberg is a famous railway junction. It is a small community dominated by the

railway and schools, but it also has some large industries. Hallsberg is the centre-point of Sweden's population distribution with as many people living north of it as south.

Off to ***Lake Siljan***, one of Sweden's most famous lakes in the province of Dalarna. On our 120 km long journey we will pass many old red timber cottages which are typical of the area. The Falu-red paint - which preserves wood very well - is made from a waste product from copper-mining in the town of Falun, the seat of the oldest company in the world: Stora - already issuing bonds in 1288!

In some villages old handicrafts are kept alive. One of their products is the Dala horse which has almost become a symbol of Sweden. It is a carved red wooden horse 2.25 cm tall, originally made as a toy and sold at markets.

There are a lot of impressive views around the lake. One of them is Gesundaberget from where you can see most of the lake and Siljan's largest island, Sollerön, a favourite gathering place for mid-summer festivities. Some scientists believe that there might be large methane deposits in the Lake Siljan area, formed when a large meteor dropped on our planet way back in time and thus creating the lake.

'Poseidon - the water God' welcomes you to Gothenburg, MILLES, Carl (1875-1955). By courtesy of the Carl Milles Museum, Stockholm.

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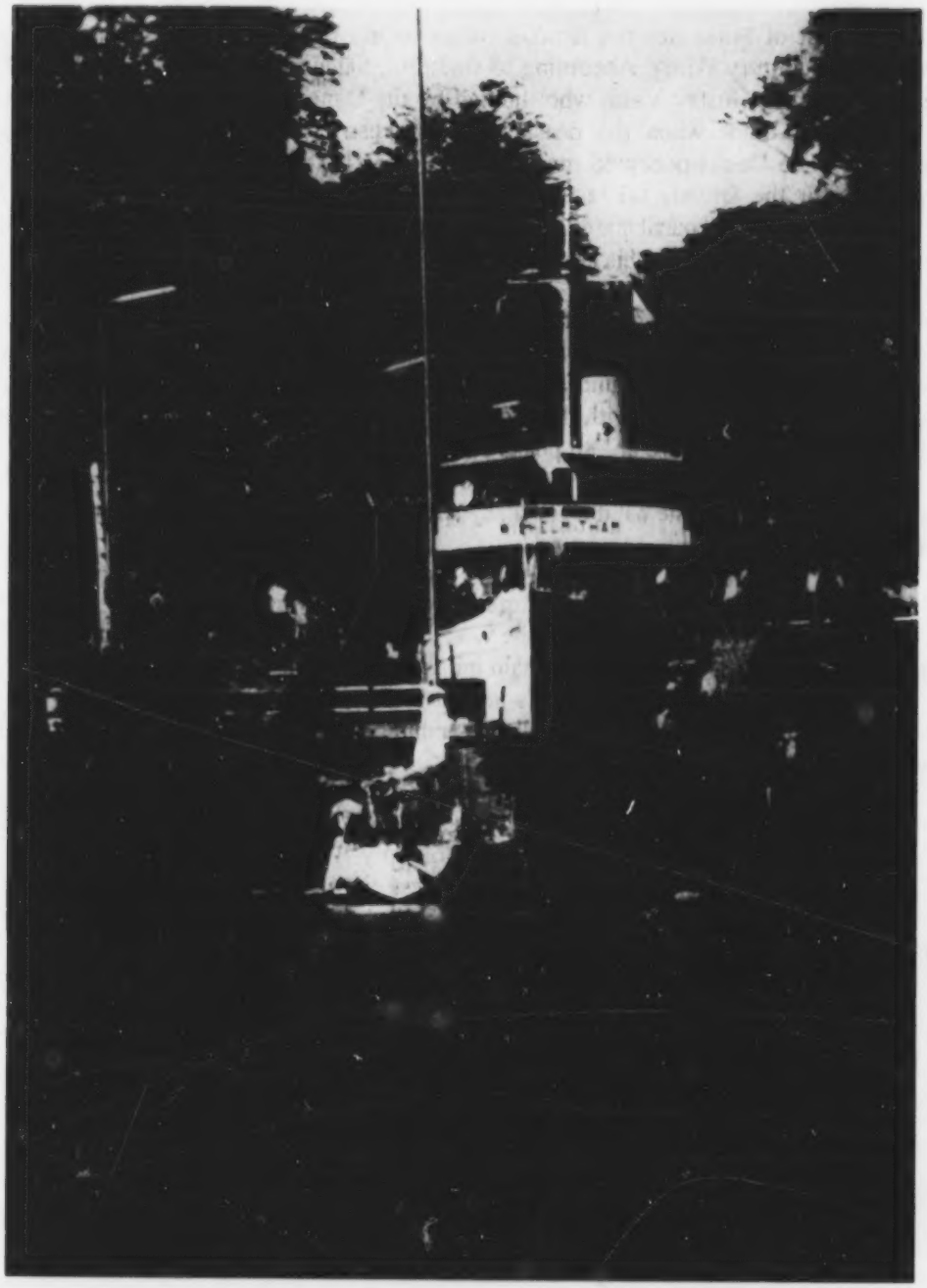
North-west of Siljan lies the famous winter sports resort of ***Sälen*** where you can do slalom or cross-country skiing. According to tradition, Sälen is where - in January 1521 - the future Swedish King Gustav Vasa, who, hunted by the Danes, fled towards Norway, decided to turn back and fight when the peasants of the district joined him in his struggle for independence. The Danes occupied most of Sweden at the time. This place is therefore the starting-point for the famous ski race, Vasaloppet, 'The Wasa run', which finishes in Mora. Over 10,000 competitors participate in this ski race every year. It is held in the beginning of March. Watch out for ***bears*** in this area!

Driving northwards we come to ***Östersund*** the geographical centre of Sweden. The Swedish composer who wrote the 'Swedish Rhapsody', Vilhelm Pettersson-Berger, lived here. We are now nearing reindeer country on our way to ***Sarek*** the largest mountainous area in Sweden - 2,000 km^2. Together with the Stora Sjofallet area and Padjelanta it forms the largest national park in Europe. There are 80 peaks above 1,800 m. as well as numerous glaciers. The magnificent and varied scenery is barren on the high mountains but the glens have a rich flora and fauna. Sarek provides the habitat for many species threatened with extinction in the rest of Sweden.

The town of ***Kiruna*** nearby is the largest in area in the whole of Europe - 19,446.9 km^2. Finland lies to the north and Norway to the west. The population of greater Kiruna is 27,000. Mining of iron ore has always been the main industry in Kiruna. Early this century mining was at its peak. Kiruna has one of the world's largest underground mine. Nearby there is a space exploration centre called Esrange as well as a military training base for the Swedish armed forces.

Our southward journey to the coast brings us to ***Umeå***, 'The city of birches' so named after a huge fire in 1888 that destroyed the whole city. When it was rebuilt a lot of birches were planted to act as firewalls. Umeå is the biggest city in the north of Sweden, with about 55,000 inhabitants. It is a university town and also has theatres, museums and even an opera house. Drive carefully around here because there are many elks in the forest!



'The blue ribbon - the Göta Canal' with one of its tour boats Wilhelm Tham, that becomes a floating hotel in the summer. By courtesy of the Swedish Institute, Stockholm.

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Our next stop is ***Avesta***. Some of the early Swedish coins were minted here, including the 10-daler coin, the heaviest coin in the world weighing 19,710 kg! The copper industry provided the material for the first roof of the Palace of Versailles in France. Today the steel and paperboard industries dominate. Avesta also boasts the largest Dala horse in the world: 13 m. tall. Don't miss the ***European bison*** herd in a special enclosure outside the town!

On our south-easterly trip towards Sweden's capital we pass through ***Uppsala***, the first seat of learning in Sweden with a university established in 1477. The spires of Upsala cathedral dominate the town skyline. This is the place to be on Walpurgis Night, 30 April, to welcome the return of spring with the young students singing around a bonfire and wearing their white student caps.

Stockholm - the town of water and bridges

Stockholm is built on 14 islands. In spite of its size Stockholm is a very clean town. You can even bathe and fish in the water which flows through the town. The Old Town is on a central island and has old buildings, narrow cobbled streets, small boutiques, antique shops and cosy restaurants. The Royal Palace is also found here. This is where you can see the crown jewels and the Royal Armoury.

On the island of Djurgården you can visit the ***Wasa Museum***. Wasa was a warship which sank on its maiden voyage in 1628. About 30 years ago the wreck was located and today the reconstructed ship is found in the museum.

When on Djurgården you can also visit the original ***Skansen***, an open-air museum founded in 1891 which houses a large collection of traditional buildings, flowers, trees and domestic animals from all different parts of Sweden, as well as a zoo.

Stockholm's most spectacular building is ***the Globe***, formed like a big golf ball. It is one of the world's largest spherical buildings. Many major events take place here, both sporting and cultural.

When you grow tired of the city, why not take a ferry boat and explore one of the 25,000 beautiful islands in ***the Stockholm archipelago*** or take a trip to ***Drottningholm***, the residence of King Gustav XVI and Queen Silvia, and see the original eighteenth-century theatre and opera house which is still in use today.

'Stockholm summer nights - water and light'. In June the sun rises at 2.30 in the morning in Stockholm! By courtesy of the Swedish Institute, Stockholm.

Öland and Gotland

Gotland is the largest Swedish island and a place to recommend if you are interested in history. The island was an important trading centre during the Middle Ages when the town of Visby was a centre for the Hanseatic trading league. Silver and gold treasures - brought home by the Vikings - have been found in the south of Gotland. There are also unique stones with engraved pictures. Gotland's ***rauks*** are an important feature of the east coast. These are strange rock figures that have been formed over the ages by erosion from wind and water. A visit to the Lummelunda caves with its impressive stalagmites and stalactites is also a must for the visitor.

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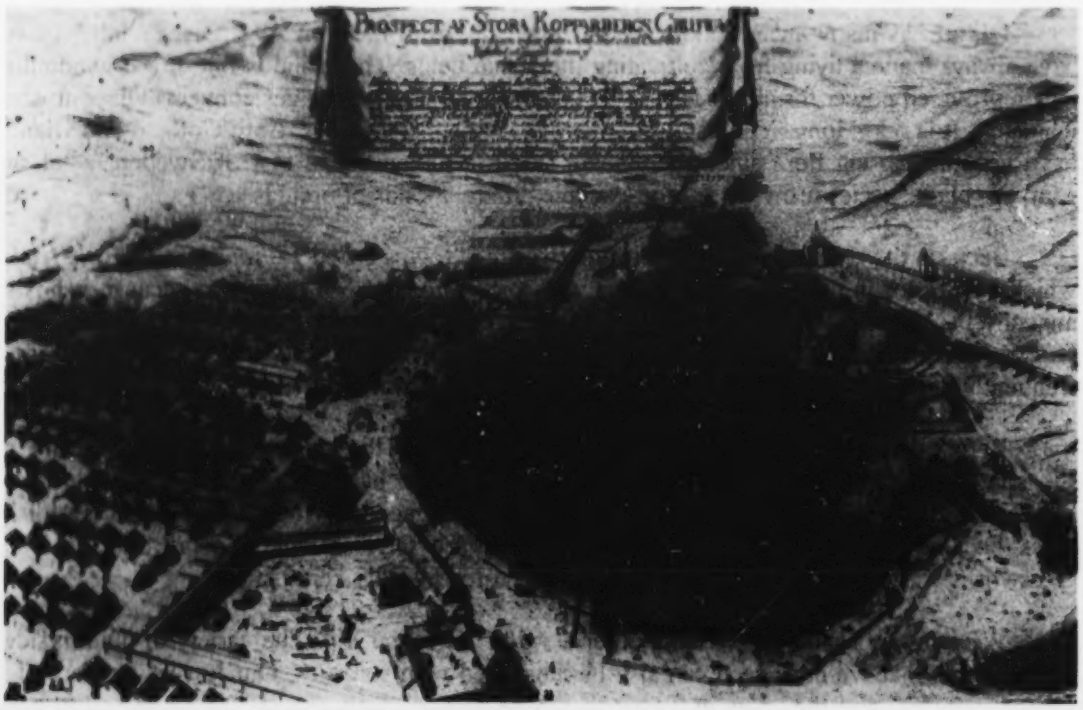
Öland has many ancient monuments, especially from the Iron Age. Öland's inhabitants have always made a living from cultivating the fertile fields. The island is full of old windmills which provided power for all the farms. One of Europe's longest bridges connects Öland to the mainland. It is 6 km long. You can also take one of the many ferries. Both Gotland and Öland have very interesting flora since the climate is warmer than in the rest of Sweden, a lot of southern plant species grow there - for example different kinds of orchids.

Back on the mainland we pass through two small towns called ***Vimmerby*** and ***Hultsfred***, which have a lot in common. Hultsfred is well known to Swedish teenagers because it hosts annually in August Sweden's biggest rock music festival, and Vimmerby is the home of the famous author Astrid Lindgren. Both towns are surrounded by beautiful countryside, frequently described in Mrs Lindgren's books. You can enjoy a lot of outdoor activities here.

Before completing our round trip we must take you to the ***glassworks district***. This is in the south-east of the province of Småland where people have made glass since the mid-eighteenth century. Early this century the glassworks engaged artistic designers and Swedish glass became world famous. Famous glassworks are Orrefors and Kosta/Boda. At the glassworks you can watch the glass being manufactured by skilful craftsmen.

We are now heading for Malmö after a ***3,000 km*** round trip. The variety of countryside and climates that we have seen can also be illustrated with statistics. Our lowest temperature record is -50° C and the snow in the north can be 150 cm deep, the record depth is 330 cm. The highest summer temperature recorded is 37° C!



'Prospect of the Big Copper-Berg Mine (Stora Kopparbergs Gruva) in 1718'. By courtesy of the Stora Company, Falun.

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II. Our culture(s): The past and the present

Our cultural past

Swedish history starts with a landscape covered by ice. At the edge of the one kilometre thick ice life began to develop about 10,000 years BC. After this glacial period, the land slowly rose. Herds of reindeer appeared and with them came the hunters.

The first farmers

Gradually this stone-age people became farmers and thereby no longer nomadic. This is one of the greatest changes in the Swedish way of life. We do not know how their society was organized but they have left mighty stone monuments which suggests a well-developed society. Around 1500 BC a class of powerful families began to import bronze and bronze objects. Most probably people had a pleasant life in a very warm climate.

The Iron Age

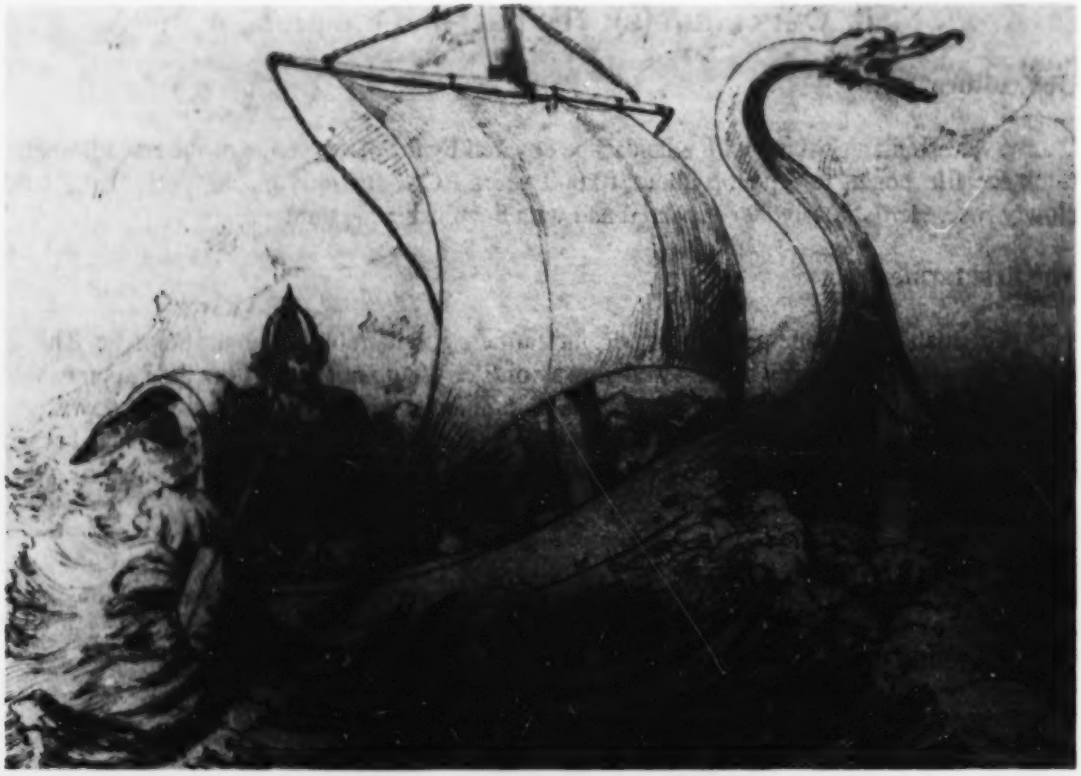
About 500 BC we learned how to make iron from our ore deposits. We could now make effective tools - axes to cut the forests - and weapons. Unfortunately the climate became very cold and humid. We talk about this period as 'the time of rye and long trousers'.

The Viking Age - 800-1000 AD

The Vikings were people who lived in what is now Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. They lived from agriculture, fishing, hunting and trading. Sometimes the Vikings went on long voyages across the sea - as far as Greenland and probably to America - or along rivers to trade or plunder. They used a specific kind of ship called a 'long boat' which could sail in shallow waters as well. This made it possible for them to sail up inlets and coves (in Swedish 'vik').

They worshipped the Asa gods, for example Oden, the king of the gods, and Thor, the god of thunder and lightning. Thor was very strong and carried a hammer called Mjölner. Oden had a horse with eight legs, Sleipner, and two ravens. They were called Hugin and Munin, who flew around in the world checking what was happening and then told Oden. Once a year the Vikings went to big meetings where they made sacrifices to the gods so that they would get good harvests and a good hunting season. (For more information on Viking mythology, see Appendix.)

To remind us of the Viking gods we have the names of four weekdays: Tuesday (Tyr's day), Wednesday (Oden's day), Thursday (Thor's day) and Friday (Freja's day).



The Viking Age has always been a great source of inspiration for artists, although we nowadays suspect that the majority of them were farmers, and that they were ***not*** bigger than we are today!

'Odd's voyage home to Uppsala with Hjalmar', WAHLBOM, Carl (1810-1858). By courtesy of the National Museum, Stockholm.

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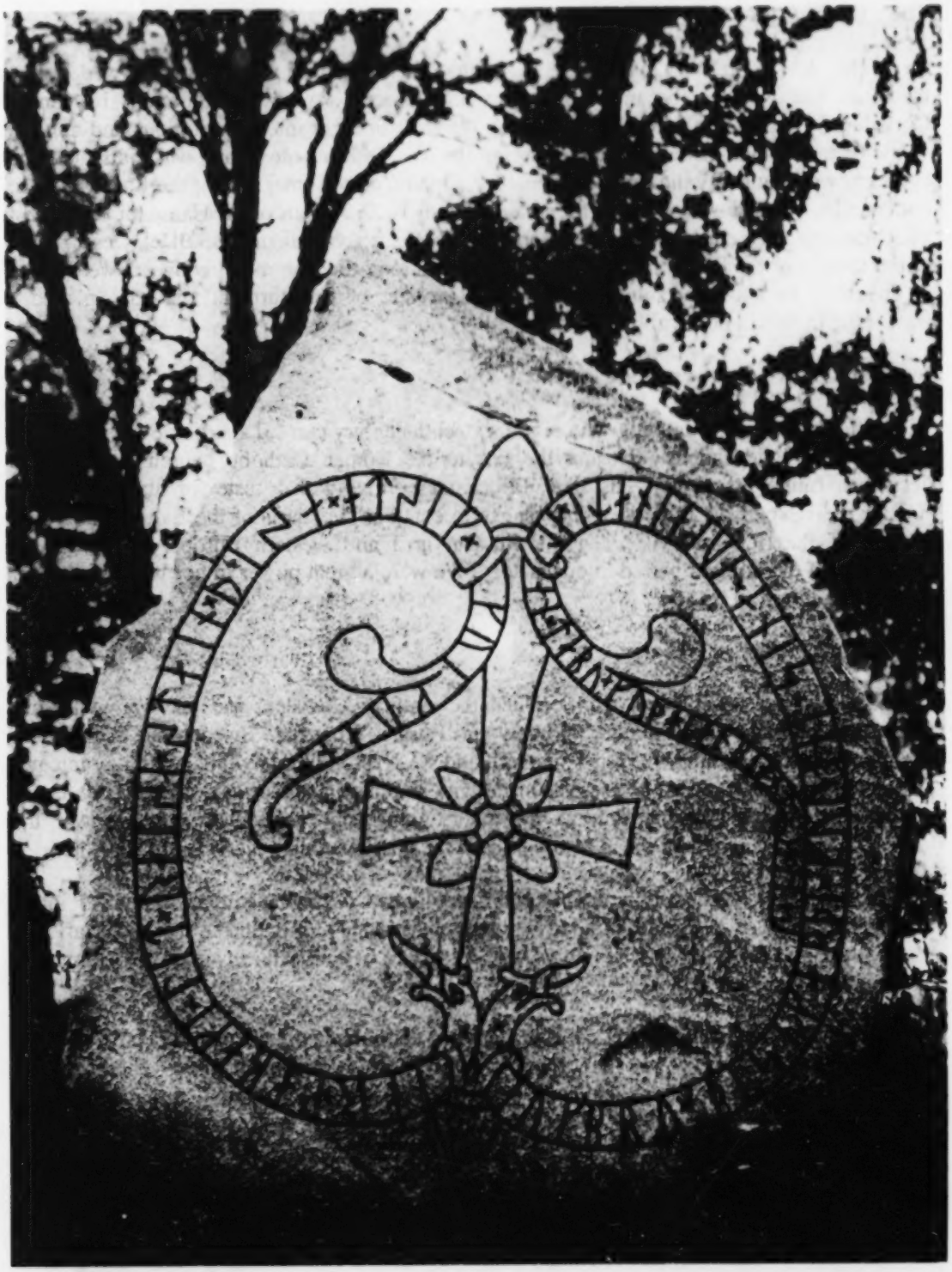

'Runic Stone'. There are some 3,000 stones of this kind in Sweden. Originally they were painted in bright colours and stood by the main roads. This stone tells the story of a man who owned a whole province. Cut approximately 1000 AD. By courtesy of the Swedish Institute, Stockholm.

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The Middle Ages

The eleventh century marked the beginning of a new period in our history. Sweden, like Denmark and Norway, became a nation, with the area around Stockholm as its centre. Christianity was slowly adopted and thereby we were brought into the religious and cultural world of the Roman Catholic church. During the Middle Ages more land was cultivated and churches were built. By the fourteenth century, Finland on the other side of the Baltic Sea had come under Swedish rule and was to remain so until 1809. As part of the Hanseatic League of trade our cities became more and more prosperous. But a great plague, the Black Death, came in the middle of the fourteenth century and it took a long time for us to recover. Sweden was at that time an agrarian country, and we had a class of free farmers who also played a considerable role in political life.

Sweden as a great power in the north

Gustav Vasa was the king who in the sixteenth century created a strong State and could maintain our independence. He cut the ties to the Roman Catholic church and Sweden became a Lutheran country. His sons, Renaissance kings with a taste for luxury, tried to finance their expensive life-style. They began to conquer the coasts of the Baltic Sea to gain control of the rich trade between the Russian area and western Europe. That was the beginning of the militant period in our history. We were a great power in northern Europe for over one hundred years.

A time for culture

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Sweden was at war with our neighbours among them Denmark, Norway and Russia. What land Sweden had gained was eventually lost again, apart from the southern and western provinces which are today integral parts of Sweden. After 1721 peace was made with Denmark and Norway, and Sweden chose a more peaceful path. By that time we had a very good reputation for our iron, we were the largest producers in the world and also produced the best iron in the world.

A most remarkable fact is the cultural development following military defeat. A lot of famous scientists gave Sweden a good reputation. All over the world the name of Carl von Linné, the great botanist, was known as well as that of Celsius who invented the centigrade thermometer.

Even more valuable progress was made when common people began to be able to read. In Protestant churches it was important to know how to read the Bible. Therefore the clergymen had to check that people could read. We can see in old papers that the women and girls were the best readers at this time. Gradually we were able to lower the child mortality rate, people could survive thanks to 'peace, potatoes and vaccination'.

Time for peace and peaceful work

In 1809 Finland was lost to Russia, and as a compensation the king - a French general in Napoleon's army - occupied Norway, which remained under Swedish rule until 1905, when Sweden and Norway got their present borders. In Sweden we have had peace since 1815 and have been able to enjoy its fruits for a period that is probably longer than any other people in the world have ever experienced.

Gradually Sweden became a part of industrial Europe. The more advanced countries in Europe bought our timber, iron and oats. But still we were rather poor and still you could see begging children along the roads.

This is the reason why a lot of people emigrated to the United States of America in the late nineteenth century. In fact ***one fifth of the population*** - roughly one million persons - left their homes!

After that, a growing industry in Sweden based on ore, wood and cheap electricity (hydro-electric power) led to better living conditions. Clever engineers developed products that were easy to sell, such as Laval's milk separator, which was sold all over the world. Common people could afford a slightly better life and began to buy ready-made clothes and shoes. When living conditions improve, people also demand the right to take part in political life on equal terms. In 1921 we reached this goal; all adults - men and women - obtained the right to vote.

Time for welfare

After 1930 when better times came after the big depression, we began to prepare for a welfare-State in Sweden. The first steps were taken to give the children a better start in life, to build better houses for the families, to give the poor and the elderly a good life. After the Second World War, which we fortunately did not take part in, we have continued to develop this welfare society.

In Sweden we had no part in the colonial exploitation of the Third World. Of course we are aware of the fact that we have profited from the low prices on products from the new States. This awareness and a sense of solidarity have contributed to an active policy for a dialogue between North and South. We are firmly convinced that if we want peace in the world, we mush abolish poverty.

Summary

To explain our way to a very favoured position in the world we can point out some decisive factors:

Early in our history we had a well regulated State with kings ruling according to the laws. We had a good economic system with our own central bank. A high level of education gave us both famous scientists and a literate population.

In the nineteenth century we managed to lower the high rate of infant mortality. After the hard years we were able to produce enough food for a growing population. We gradually achieved a better life by taking part in industrial development.

We have also had a fair share of good luck. We have escaped the evils of two world wars. The peace we have enjoyed for nearly two hundred years is of course the main reason for our highly favoured position.

Ten outstanding Swedish men and women

Saint Birgitta (1303-1373)

Birgitta founded a monastic order and the convent of Vadstena. When she died she was canonized, as the first Swede ever, by the Pope in Rome, 600 years ago.

Queen Kristina (1626-1689)

Daughter of Gustav II Adolf, she was queen of Sweden between 1632 and 1654. Her great interests were art and science, and she brought many of Europe's most learned philosophers (among them Descartes - Cartesius), artists and scientists to Sweden. She abdicated and converted to Catholicism in 1654. She lies buried in Rome.

Christoffer Polhem (1661-1751)

Swedish inventor and engineer. He studied mathematics in Uppsala and then went to England. He brought many new inventions to Sweden, and constructed machines which helped the miners in their work and improved the vital mining industry.

Jonas Alströmer (1685-1761)

A businessman and a patriot who travelled to other countries and then, like Polhem, brought home interesting new ideas. He was the one who introduced the potato to the Swedes in the 1720s.

Carl von Linné (1707-1778)

A botanist who worked mainly in Uppsala. He was involved in the formation of the Academy of Science in 1739. His masterpiece is the book ***Systema Naturae*** (1735) in which 8,000 plants are systematically described with one name for the family and one for the species. He named the plants in Latin, so that the system could be used everywhere. He was also the first person to explore the northern parts of Sweden and describe its plants and wildlife, and also its people. A flower has been named in his honour, the 'linnea borealis'. Linné is called 'the Flower King'.

Fredrika Bremer (1801-1865)

Founder of a feminist movement and active in trying to raise the status of women at a time when they had very few legal rights. She was also an important novelist, who managed to publish her work under her own name instead of under a male pseudonym. She travelled in North America and wrote about her experiences in the 'New World'.

Alfred Nobel (1833-1896)

Born in Stockholm he grew up in Saint Petersburg (Leningrad) where his father was an inventor in weapon technology. He continued his father's work and invented many new explosives. He also founded many factories in different countries. His last will was that his money would be used to improve the work done in the fields of art and science. So every year on 10 December, the Nobel Prize-winners come to Stockholm to receive their awards from the King of Sweden. A peace prize is presented by the Norwegian Parliament, in Oslo.

Evert Taube (1890-1976)

Songwriter and poet. His themes are the sea, life in the ports, Stockholm and its archipelago, love between men and women and nature. He had been a sailor in his youth and had lived in Argentina (1910-1915). He made his début as a singer in 1918 with a collection of his own songs. He was a very popular troubadour, accompanying himself on the guitar. Some of his best known songs are 'The Girl in Havana', 'The Sjösala Waltz' and 'The Stockholm Melody'.

Astrid Lindgren (1907-)

Born in Vimmerby, Småland, her writing career started in 1945 with Pippi Longstocking, which she made up for her daughter once when the child was ill. Since then she has written about 30 books and they have been translated into 54 languages. A reporter once asked her how she could know so well what it was like to be Ronia, the robber's daughter, or how things were in Wild Rose Valley, and she answered: 'I know, but I won't tell you how'. She writes for 'the child in her' and for all children. Millions of children have grown up with her stories. Many of her books have been made into films that have gained great popularity. Some of her best known works are 'Mio, My son', 'Karlsson on the roof', 'The Brother Lionheart', 'Ronia, the Robber's Daughter', 'Pippi Longstocking' and the books about Emil.

Olof Palme (1927-1986)

The Prime Minister of Sweden, Olof Palme, was killed on 28 February 1986. He was shot down in central Stockholm when walking home from a cinema together with his wife. Although a reward of 500,000 Swedish crowns was promised to the one who could find the murderer, the crime has not yet been solved. Palme was a controversial politician, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, who always stood up for the rights of small States, and for solidarity with the Third World. In 1980 he was asked by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to try to find a solution to the war between Iran and Iraq.

Our culture today

Multi-ethnic Sweden

A hundred years ago Sweden was a poor country which suffered from bad harvests, starvation and high unemployment. Hundreds of thousands of Swedes left the country in order to try to make a better life for themselves. Most of them went to North America. Today the situation is just the opposite. Now many people want to come to Sweden to find a better life. For the Swedes, the long period of peace has meant more or less untrammelled industrial development. So living standards are among the highest in the world now. Sweden still has among the lowest rates of unemployment in the world. Above all, Sweden is now a relatively stable democracy.

Until the Second World War Sweden was more uniform than most countries as regards ethnic origin, language and culture. The only ethnic minorities were the Sami people (the Lapps) who were the first settlers of Scandinavia, and the Finnish-speaking population since the time of the joint kingdom of Finland and Sweden (from the eleventh century to the nineteenth century). Both these groups lived mainly in the north.

During the Second World War refugees came from Germany and the Baltic nations; Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In 1956 many Hungarians arrived. But in the 1960s and 1970s most of the immigrants were workers that were badly needed as manpower in the booming Swedish industry. These workers came mainly from Finland, Yugoslavia and Greece.

In the 1970s and 1980s more and more political refugees began to seek asylum in Sweden, for example Chileans, Uruguayans, Iranians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Kurds from different countries, Ethiopians, Ugandans, Somalians. In recent years there has been a sharp rise in the number of asylum seekers. This has raised a lot of problems, since the National Board of Immigration cannot deal fast enough with all the applications for residence permits. There are long waiting periods for asylum seekers, before they get the permit or are rejected and sent out of the country. The government has restricted the number of immigrants now and there is a debate going on here about the policy towards refugees. Out of 30,000 asylum seekers 56 per cent are now rejected (1990).

Today we have about 1.1 million immigrants in Sweden - this figure includes children who have one or two parents born in another country. Swedish schools have become quite international. In the Stockholm area there are schools with over 130 languages spoken. The policy is to integrate immigrant children into the school system as soon as they can speak a little Swedish, but they are also taught their own language if it is possible to organize it, so that they can keep their own culture alive, and return to their native country when the situation there improves. Probably most of the immigrants will stay.

What has this meant for Swedish society today? Well, we have learned to enjoy new dishes and to eat more nutritious bread again, and to cook with new spices. Many of our popular artists have a mixed cultural background, for example Titiyo, a female singer, and Dr Alban, a male singer, both with Swedish-African roots. Since the policy of the Board of Immigration is to spread out the immigrants to various parts of the country - to avoid big ghettos or camps - and to facilitate the integration of the newcomers into Swedish society, this means that even in small towns there is now a cosmopolitan atmosphere. But it is still a new phenomenon to us, and some Swedes find it difficult to get used to it. By now the immigrants who came in the 1950s and 1960s and even in the 1970s are well integrated but

those who come from more remote countries, with cultures and life-styles new to us, find it difficult to make contact with the Swedes. It takes time to get used to one another.

Swedish culture is heavily influenced by American or English fashions in music, clothes and even food. Young people especially listen a lot to groups that sing in English, and they dress in jeans and shirts or sweaters with American texts on, and they eat fast-foods such as pizza, hamburgers and hot dogs. The same is true of the film industry, by and large. Most films and videos are American. But Swedish films are often of high quality and when they are released, they attract lots of Swedes to the cinema, not least young people.

The Sami people still retain many of their customs as well as their language, although there are only about 2,500 Samis who keep reindeer and they do so with modern means of transport such as snowscooters and helicopters. Most Samis of today have never worked with reindeer herding, but that is still the foundation of their culture. There are about 60,000 Samis in the northern parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland and the Soviet Union, 15,000 of whom live in Sweden.

Great events in Sweden

The Swedes are very fond of all sorts of out-door sports and endurance tests!

Vasaloppet is a very famous skiing event in Sweden with over 10,000 participants. The run is approximately 55 miles. During the Vasoloppet competition the skiers eat lots of bread, pea soup and blueberry soup.

Lidingöloppet is a 30 km running race in the neighbourhood of Stockholm. It gathers approximately 30,000 competitors in many classes every year.

Vansbrosimningen is a swimming competition. The swimmers have to swim 4 km in running water that is 10° to 15° C. Even if they are well prepared by training and use grease or liniment on their bodies many have to be picked up by the boats that follow the race because they run out of fighting spirit!

5-dagars is a five days cross-country running competition with 25,000 competitors each day, divided into 126 classes. Every year a big camping town is built up for a week somewhere in Sweden. With all family members the host town has a population of 50,000 more than it usually has. Many cross-country runners come every year and spend a week of their holiday participating in the '5 days'. In 1990 participants came from 29 countries in five continents.

Vätternrundan is a 200 km bicycle race round the largest lake in Sweden. The ***Stockholm Marathon*** is a very popular endurance test which takes place in central Stockholm in June every year. ***Tjejmilen***, 'the Girl's Mile' is the world's largest competition for women who run 10 km (a Swedish mile) in central Stockholm, divided into groups from 'élite' to 'walk with pram/stroller'.

Our main holidays

Christmas and New Year

We always have a Christmas tree. It is usually a spruce that we cut in the forest and bring home to our living room. Those who live in bigger towns and cities buy them in the market. In recent years, plastic imitations of the Christmas tree have become quite common!

We decorate the tree with different coloured glass balls, electric candles, tinsel and sometimes flags. In the old days real candles were used on the tree.

On 24 December we start our real Christmas celebrations. The average Swedish Christmas nowadays is not so much about the birthday of Jesus as about meeting family and friends. Long before we were christianized in Sweden, we celebrated a feast called Midwinter Sacrifice. When we became Christians, we mixed the two feasts. The custom of giving each other Christmas presents and bringing a Christmas tree into the house actually dates from before Christianity. For Christmas we decorate the whole house in red and green colours. We bake all kinds of pastry and sweets, and make dishes for the Christmas smörgåsbord.

The children spend the whole of Christmas Eve, 24 December, waiting for Father Christmas to arrive. He will not come with gifts until the evening, when they have eaten their Christmas fish, ham and rice pudding. In the afternoon, we watch a Christmas programme with Walt Disney cartoons on television. This is a new Swedish tradition! After dinner, somebody dresses up as Father Christmas and knocks on the front door, is invited in and sits down by the Christmas tree to read on the parcels who the gifts are for. Little gnomes, children dressed in red, are often his assistants, handing the gifts to everyone.

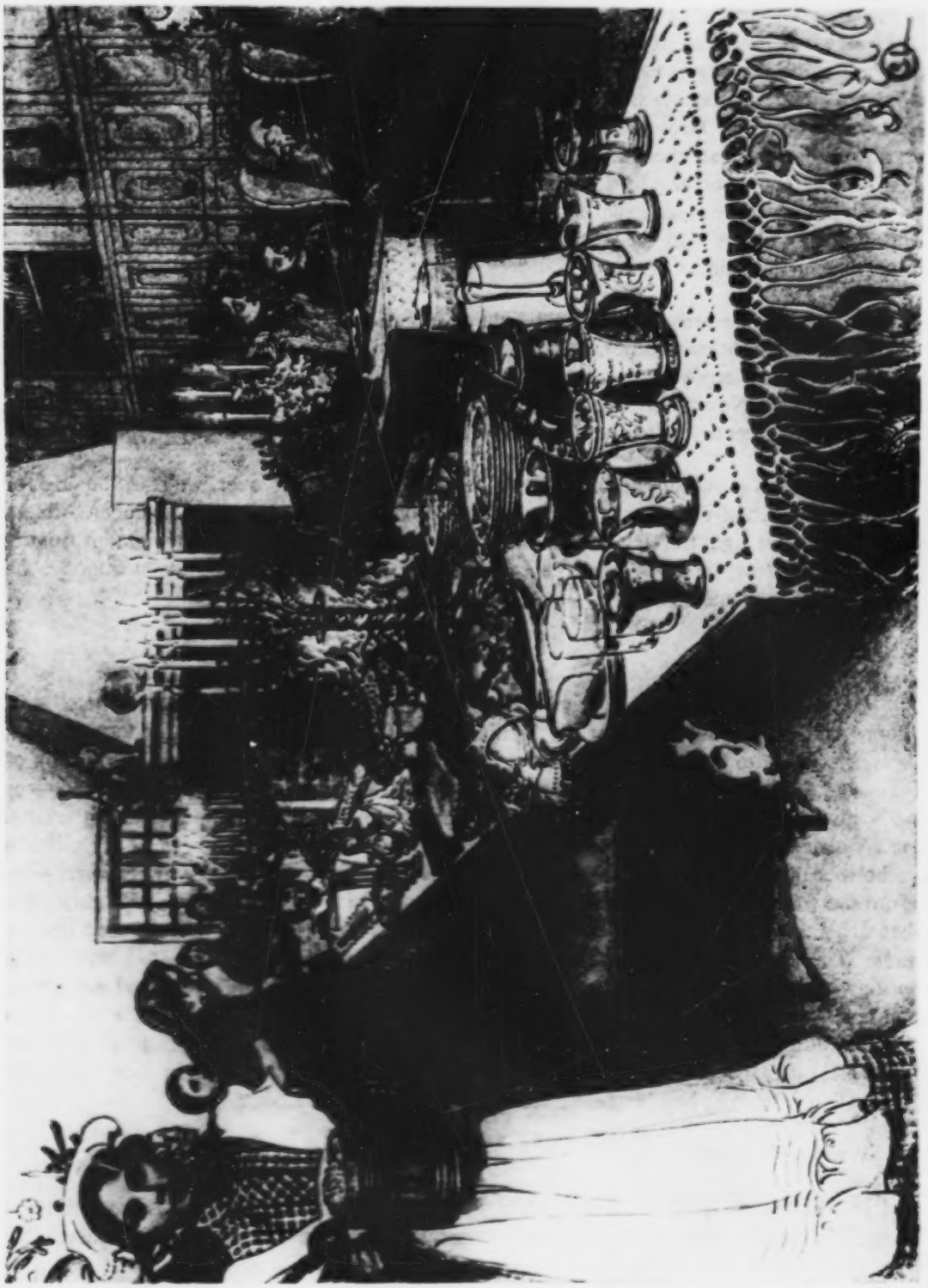
On the next morning a lot of Swedes wake early, when it is still quite dark, and go to church for the Christmas service. Many who never go to church during the rest of the year, get up to attend this service very early. Both outside and inside the church there are candles everywhere. Beautiful songs are sung and the Christmas Gospel is read out by the priest. Christmas Day is a quiet and peaceful day, when we meet relatives and eat Christmas food together and play indoor games and relax together.

One week later it is New Year's Eve. We celebrate it in the same way as in many other countries. We set off fire crackes at midnight and wish one another Happy New Year with a toast.

The Swedish Easter

Easter is another time of feast and tradition for Swedes. It is celebrated in March or April, the date depending on the position of the moon. We bring bare twigs into our houses, decorate them with coloured feathers, put them in water and soon we have green leaves in our homes. We also use the yellow colour a lot during Easter, in tablecloths, ornaments, etc. The daffodil is called Easter lily in Swedish, and you can find them in almost every Swedish home.

According to our folklore, on Maundy Thursday all witches flew on their brooms to the Brocken (Sw: 'Blåkulla', blue hill) with their black cats and their coffee pot to meet the Devil and have a big party. Children dress up on Maundy Thursday as Easter witches with a scarf, a long skirt and an apron. They paint their cheeks red with black dots to look ugly, but it makes then look very sweet. They walk around from house to house handing out Easter cards that they have made themselves and receiving sweets and fruits in return.



Christmas Eve, LARSSON, Carl (1853-1919), painted in 1906. By courtesy of the National Museum.

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At Easter we eat eggs which we decorate with water colours. We also give children Easter eggs. It is a card box, egg-shaped, and usually decorated with chickens and spring flowers. Inside the egg there are sweets. On Good Friday, which we call Long Friday, all shops are closed and people stay at home from school and work. It is a very sad day, for it is the day Jesus died on the cross. But the next day is Easter Eve and the end of Lent. Nowadays we do not usually fast, though. At Easter we eat a lot of eggs, since they are said to have special powers: they are the beginning of new life. Easter Day, Sunday, is a happy day for all the evil powers have withdrawn from earth and we do not have to be afraid any more, according to folklore. On Easter Monday the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated, and that marks the end and climax of Easter.

In Sweden, the year goes from the light of summer to the dark of winter, from the dark of winter to the light of summer. In the autumn, from September to November, we are busy beavers and only enjoy one short holiday, All Saint's Day, on the Saturday between 31 October and 6 November. On that day, many people go to the cemetery to light a candle on the grave of a deceased family member.

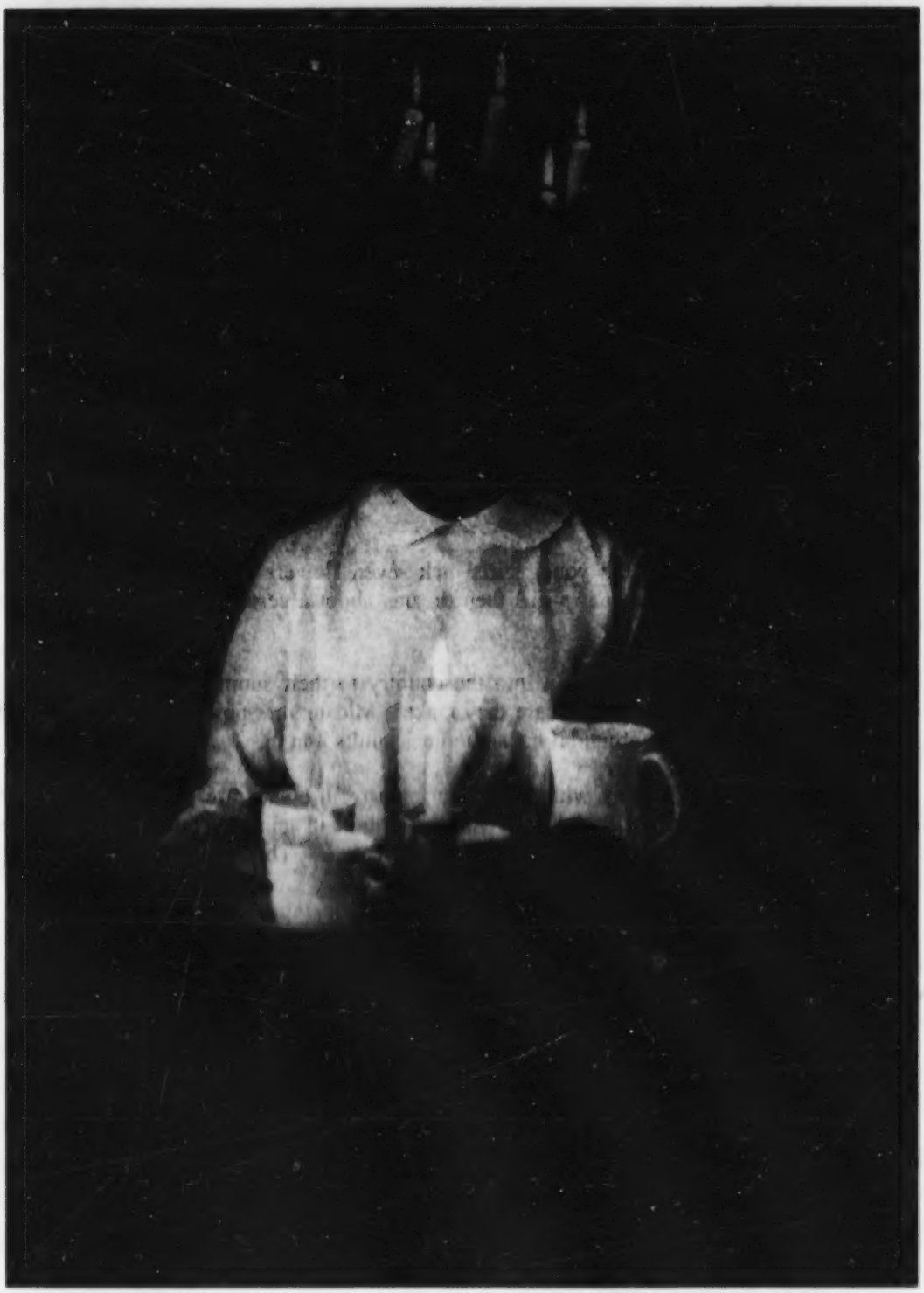
As the days grow shorter and the cold and dark season takes over, we start longing for Christmas and actually begin our Christmas season on the first Sunday of December, Advent Sunday. Then we light the first candle out of four in a candle holder. We also put an Advent Star in the window, lit up by an electric bulb inside it. On the second Advent Sunday, the second candle is lit and so on.

Lucia Day

On 13 December we celebrate Lucia. It is the darkest morning of the whole year. Perhaps that is why the legend of the Sicilian saint, Lucia, has become so important to us. Lucia, according to the legend, spread warmth and light around her. Early in the morning of 13 December, everywhere in Sweden, in homes and workplaces, schools and factories, offices and hospitals, and on television, Lucia and her train appear, all dressed in long, white shirts. Lucia wears a crown with candles in her hair and a red ribbon around her waist. The ribbon symbolizes the blood that Lucia shed when she was tortured the same way as Jesus was, before she was burnt. The candles nowadays are usually lit by a small battery. Her attendants wear tinsel wreaths and around their waists they also wear a tinsel ribbon, and they carry a candle. The boys have tall tapered white hats with golden stars on and a stick with a big morning star, and are therefore called 'star lads'. Some are dressed in brown and are ginger snap boys, while others are little gnomes, all in red. They sing traditional Lucia songs and bring morning coffee with special Lucia buns spiced with saffron, ginger snaps of different shapes and other special Lucia pastry. Except for Lucia's small native town in Sicily it is only Sweden that celebrates her, but here Lucia Day is a very firm tradition.

Walpurgis Night

In Sweden 30 April is called Valborgsmässoafton. This day symbolizes the arrival of spring. We greet it with bonfires, songs (often by men's choirs), speeches and dance. This happens all across our beautiful country. One of the most common songs sung on the Eve of May Day is 'Längtan till landet' (Longing for the countryside).



'Lucia.' She greets the return of the light on 13 December. By courtesy of the Swedish Institute.

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First of May

The First of May is the workers' day. On that day they demonstrate and show their opinions. It became the International Labour Day in 1889 and was celebrated for the first time in 1890. Since then there has always been a big demonstration procession in Stockholm (and smaller ones in the smaller towns of Sweden), with brass bands, placards and banners and trade union flags.

We also have a First of May Flower. It is a little plastic flower on a pin which you wear on your jacket. The May Flower is sold to get money to fight diseases for instance. It brings in about 14 million Swedish crowns every year.

Midsummer

The biggest festive occasion of the summer is Midsummer, originally on the longest day of the year. Nowadays we celebrate Midsummer the weekend which is nearest to 24 June. Then we get together to decorate the Midsummer pole with leafy branches and flowers and then raise it. We also call it the Maypole. 'To may' in Swedish means to embellish with green'.

On Midsummer's Eve the young girls pick seven flowers and put them under their pillows. The tradition goes that if a girl then dreams about a certain young man - she will marry him!

At Midsummer families go out into the country to their summer houses, or to their relatives living in the countryside. There they make a Midsummer pole and dance around it. Usually only children dance around it but sometimes adults join in.

New potatoes and herring with sour cream and fresh chives are popular food at this festival. We put the herring in a mixture of vinegar, water and spices. Some people like it and some hate it! The other Midsummer speciality is strawberries. The first ones are usually ripe about that time. We eat them fresh with milk or cream.

In some families we go out to our relatives in the country. Then we eat and play games. We also usually go rowing in our boat, which we keep in a lake near the house. We usually stay there all day and night until it gets a bit dark (early in the morning) and then return home.

Birthday

This is the day when you lie in bed and pretend to be asleep even though you have been awake for ages. And you wonder whether the family is ever going to come with your birthday cake and the gifts.

III. Who are we?

The Swedes belong to the Nordic Peoples and are generally tall, blond and have blue eyes and fair skin, but far from all of us fit into this description. There are of course people who have dark hair and brown eyes too.

The Swede is often very anonymous and does not want to stick out from the crowd. Some call us careful, while others say that we are reserved. Some even claim that we have reserved manners. At first sight this might be your opinion of us, but there is a lot more to discover if you give us a few minutes to 'open up'.

'Nature' and 'countryside' are two important words that could help you understand what is 'Swedish'. We follow the changes in nature and try to live in harmony with them. During the dark winter months (December-April) we turn pale from the lack of light and we seem to hide from the cold by staying inside our centrally heated houses. In other words, just keeping to ourselves. So if you come to Sweden as a tourist during this period of the year you'll probably get quite a negative view of our country and the inhabitants.

However, in summer (May-August) it is a totally different story. The sun and the heat change our way of living completely. We simply adore the sun and we can relax in the light for hours, trying to get a tan. The rebirth of nature makes us start living again. We don't have to wear warm clothes (to protect our bodies from the cold) for a while. There is daylight 18 hours a day and we spend as much time as possible outdoors. During summer time the Swedes can be compared to a flower in bloom.

We Swedes, are the kind of people that often like to live as we have always done. We are not conservative, only careful when it comes to projects which can affect our daily life. Therefore it is rather difficult to bring any sudden changes into our society. Changes do occur, but it takes time until we get used to them.

When you get to know a Swede you will find we are usually honest. Honesty is an important part of our society. We are also quite clever and practical in many ways and we do things according to a set routine.

Just keep in mind that it often takes time to get to know a Swede. We are by nature afraid of making fools of ourselves, but young people have begun to break this trend of shyness and we hope that all of us will realize one day that we learn from our mistakes!

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy. The present monarch is King Carl-Gustav XVI, who is married to Queen Silvia. The king has no formal powers - they rest with our parliament, the Riksdag, with 349 elected members - but he represents the State on many official occasions. He is kept informed of all matters concerning the State. His ancestors came from France from the Napoleonic Bernadotte family. Queen Silvia is of German origin, so we have an international monarchy. Their daughter, Princess Victoria, will one day become Queen of Sweden.

Our national anthem

Our national anthem was written in the nineteenth century and is called Du gamla-du fria (You old and free country). At the time Norway was under Swedish rule (and Finland had been so until 1809) so the word Nordic is used in the song. In it we praise our liberty, our climate, the sun and the countryside and the text says that we wish both to live and to die in the north. We also mention the silence in the countryside. Many grown-up Swedes love to go for long

walks in the forests or in the mountains just to enjoy the silence! In the text we also boast about our former empires - during the Viking period and during the reign of Charles XII. Today we are not very nationalistic and most young people associate the national anthem with sporting events. Indeed some very young children call it the 'ice-hockey song'.

The Swedish flag is blue and yellow - the colour of the summer sky!

Religion

In Sweden freedom of religion is part of our constitution. You can hold any belief you desire. Many people have no religious beliefs. No one is discriminated because of their religion. The only persons who have to belong to the Lutheran State Church are the king, church ministers and bishops. Of course immigrants who come to Sweden have the right to retain their religion.

The first churches in Sweden were Roman Catholic but in the sixteenth century Protestantism was introduced from Germany. At that time there was no religious tolerance. The church split into many denominations and in the nineteenth century the free churches had many followers. It was then that the Pentecostal Church, the Salvation Army, the Baptist Church, the Swedish Mission Convenant Church (the Swedish Covenant Church) and others were founded. The largest of the free churches today is the Catholic Church, mainly due to the fact that quite a few immigrants belong to this faith. The Muslim faith is also growing for this same reason and in a couple of Swedish towns mosques have been built.

Around 92 per cent of the population belong to the Church of Sweden - membership is acquired automatically at birth unless the parents say no. You have to apply to leave the church as an adult. The membership level of the State Church is high but the service attendance is low. Everyone has to pay a church tax, non-members pay a lower sum, which goes to the State Church. With this money the church registers such events as births, marriages, deaths, confirmations and provides funeral services. These church records have been made for centuries so it is quite easy to find out about your ancestors by consulting them.

The State Church has been closely linked with the Swedish State for centuries but there are plans to separate them. The registration services will be taken over by the taxation authorities.

We study religion at school - not just our own religion but also other major religions in the world. The Christian religion was very important for everyone in the old days. We have many beautiful churches as a record of this. We, the young people, may not be very active churchgoers but most of us are interested in questions related to the meaning of life.

IV. Cultural life in the city and in the country

The Christian religion has influenced many of our rituals from birth to death. Most Swedish children are born in a hospital maternity ward nowadays and the majority are baptized in church as infants. The parents then promise to give the child a Christian upbringing and also give it a Christian name. During the baptism service the Minister bathes the baby's head in water.

Many young people (around 75 per cent) in Sweden are confirmed at the age of 14, when they renew the promise to respect the Christian faith and when they learn more about Christianity. We are tested on our knowledge or show it by performing a play in the church. On confirmation day we receive many flowers and gifts.

Boys and girls are not treated differently and have the same status. We go to the same schools. In school girls often prefer to be with other girls and boys with boys. We go to discos and parties at weekends and it is then that boys and girls get to develop relationships.

In their late teens some young people go steady for a long time. They do not jump from one partner to the next. They are very aware of the need for contraception, especially nowadays, with the new and additional risk of AIDS. Contraceptives are easily available and abortion is free. At school we learn about relationships and safe sex education classes. Sex is considered natural. Young people in Sweden are perhaps allowed to behave more maturely than teenagers in other countries.

Most of us get to know a number of boyfriends or girlfriends before we settle for the right one and move in together. Some young people become engaged and exchange rings to show they have promised to be together. Some people get married officially but many simply live together. You can get married when you are 18, which is the official age of adulthood (you can then vote, get a driver's licence for a car and many other things). The most common age to get married is around twenty-four. We can marry whoever we want to. Our parents do not choose for us. Usually the bride's family pays for the wedding but it is increasingly common for the bride's and groom's families to share the costs.

During the marriage ceremony the couple promise to love each other 'for better, for worse, till death do us part'. The bride and groom exchange rings which are placed on the fourth finger of the left hand. The bride usually wears a white dress and the groom a black dinner jacket. When they come out of church the relatives and friends throw grains of rice at them. Then the wedding feast begins during which the couple receive many gifts. After the feast they leave on a honeymoon - a short holiday together. After that the couple will live in their own home. It is not common in Sweden to live with parents or grandparents once we are adults.

Sometimes marriages end badly and couples get divorced. Divorces are fairly common but there are many divorced people who remarry or live together with a new partner.

Equality between the sexes is something we strive for. Therefore when a child is born either the husband or the wife have the right to stay at home with full pay to look after the baby, for 18 months. Mostly women do this but there are more and more men sharing the responsibility with their wives. When the baby is older he or she may go to a day nursery while the parents work.

Our welfare state provides us with a lot of good things: family allowances, free education all through school and even at university level, free school meals and free dental care for children. We have a low rate of unemployment and high material standards at home.

A typical Swedish family consists of four members, two parents and two children, who may live in a detached house or in a flat. The home has many machines: for instance electric cooker, fridge, freezer, washing-machine, dryer, dishwasher, that all make housework easier. You'll find a telephone, a video, a television and a stereo set in many homes. Car ownership is high and some families own two cars. Some also have a personal computer. If we are ill and unable to work we have an insurance system that gives us up to 80 per cent of our pay. If you go to hospital you only pay a fraction of the real cost.

Most people belong to the middle class - only a few belong to the upper class, but there are a number of people who live at or below the official basic income level. They can receive extra money from the social welfare authorities. Income differences between men and women are not as great as in the past but they still exist. An increasing number of women are becoming involved in politics and we have women politicians who are ministers in our government.

Family life

'I am a girl who is 14 years old. My name is Ingela. My interests are letter-writing, music, boys and pets. After school I usually do my homework. It takes me about one hour. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays I usually go to the sports hall. There I watch the boys when they play volleyball. I have played handball before but I did not get much time over for my homework so I stopped playing. It was fun so I'm thinking of starting again. At weekends I don't do so much. Sometimes I phone a friend. We usually walk down to the shopping centre and look at different shops. Sometimes I watch a volleyball game - I love volleyball.

In our family we are two children and two parents. I have a step-brother called Robert. My mother and my real father separated four years ago, but now my mother has a new husband. I can meet my father when I want to. That's really good.

Our house looks small from the outside but there are seven rooms and a large kitchen. Upstairs I have my own rooms - one large and one small. The room opposite is my mum 's and her husband's. They also have a smaller room like mine where Robert sleeps. Downstairs we have a living room with four armchairs, a table, a record-player and a television. The adjoining room is quite like the living room but instead we have a big sofa, a table and one nice armchair. There is an open fireplace in this room. Beside the kitchen we have a dining room with a large dining table and eight chairs. There are two cupboards and one big grandfather clock too. In the kitchen we have one table with four chairs, an electric cooker, a freezer, a fridge and some cupboards. The backyard is quite big.'

School life

In Sweden we normally start school when we are seven years old, but parents can choose to let their child start at six. Most Swedish children go to 'play school' three hours a day when they are five and six years.

The compulsory school lasts for nine years and is divided into three levels of three years each. In grades one to three we learn how to read and write in our own language, and some basic arithmetic. From grade 3 we learn English. When we enter the intermediate level, in grade 4, we get new subjects: history, geography and social studies, for instance. Throughout the nine years we have physical education, music, arts and some home economics and

handicrafts. In handicrafts the pupils - boys and girls alike - alternate between woodwork, metal work and textile work. In woodwork we learn how to use tools and machines, make simple drawings of our projects and produce things; in textile work we learn how to use the sewing machine and to sew, knit, crochet and weave. The first six years are normally spent in a school close to where we live.

When we enter grade 7 and the senior level, there are many new things to get used to. Usually we then change schools and often we have to go by bus to the new school. Instead of just one or two teachers, as during the first six years, we have several different subject teachers and have our lessons in many different rooms. Instead of having our own desks in a classroom of our own, we get lockers in the corridor to keep our things in. We study about 12 different subjects. New ones are physics, chemistry and biology. From grade 7 we choose between 'Special' (advanced) or 'general' courses for mathematics and English. We may also start with one new subject, and for the new one we have a choice. Most pupils take a second foreign language, the majority takes German or French. In grades 8 and 9 both boys and girls study home economics, where we learn to cook and look after a home.

During those two last grades we have six to ten weeks of work experience. That means that we have no lessons and instead go visiting various places of work. Everyone goes on their own to a workplace. We all go to the sectors 'trade and service', 'medical care and office' and 'industry and engineering'. During the intermediate and senior levels there is something called 'Free activities' (two/three lessons a week) where you can choose something fun such as photography, chess, computers, drama, car mechanics, horseback riding, bowling - anything that the school is able to organize!

In grade 8 we get marks at the end of the term for the first time. The first seven years the evaluation of the pupils work is done when teachers get together with the pupil and the parents and talk about the results of the work of the pupil. The marks are graded on a scale of 1-5, with 5 as the highest, 3 is the average mark.

Pupils apply for upper secondary school on their leaving certificates from grade 9. In order to compare the achievement level of a class with that of other classes in Sweden there are standardized national tests in Swedish, English and Mathematics at the senior level.

There are 20-30 pupils in a class (fewer the first three years). Boys and girls are taught together, usually even in physical education. The length of the school day is eight hours, except for grades 1 and 2 where it is five hours and twenty minutes. A lesson lasts for 40 minutes. Usually the school starts between 8 and 9 a.m. and ends between 3 and 4 p.m. We go to school five days a week, Monday to Friday. The school year is divided into two terms. The autumn term lasts from the end of August to the end of December, just before Christmas. The spring term runs from the beginning of January to the beginning of June. We have about ten weeks' summer holidays. Great! Most teenagers try to find a summer job and many travel abroad.

It is difficult to find a job directly after the compulsory school, so about 90 per cent go on to upper secondary school. Sometimes that school is located in a neighbouring municipality and you have to go there by bus/train. At the upper secondary school we can choose between many different 'lines'. Fifty per cent go to vocational lines: at present these are two years, but they will extend over three years in the future. The others take the three-year so called theoretical lines, and some the four-year technological line. The 3/4-year lines lead to further studies.

A Swedish family having breakfast (the mother is taking the photograph). By courtesy of Kerstin Nilsson, Hultsfred.

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'When the children have gone to bed', LARSSON, Carl (1853-1919).

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At present there are many changes going on in the upper secondary school system. The present system was adopted in 1971. Before that Sweden had its old 'gymnasium' with high status theoretical education to which some 4 per cent of the young people went. There were also commercial and technical high schools and vocational schools. Now these are all integrated into one school. Most vocational lines include built-in training, i.e. the students spend part of their time in industry or at other workplaces. On most vocational lines, the size of a class is 16 pupils or fewer, and on the theoretical lines up to thirty.

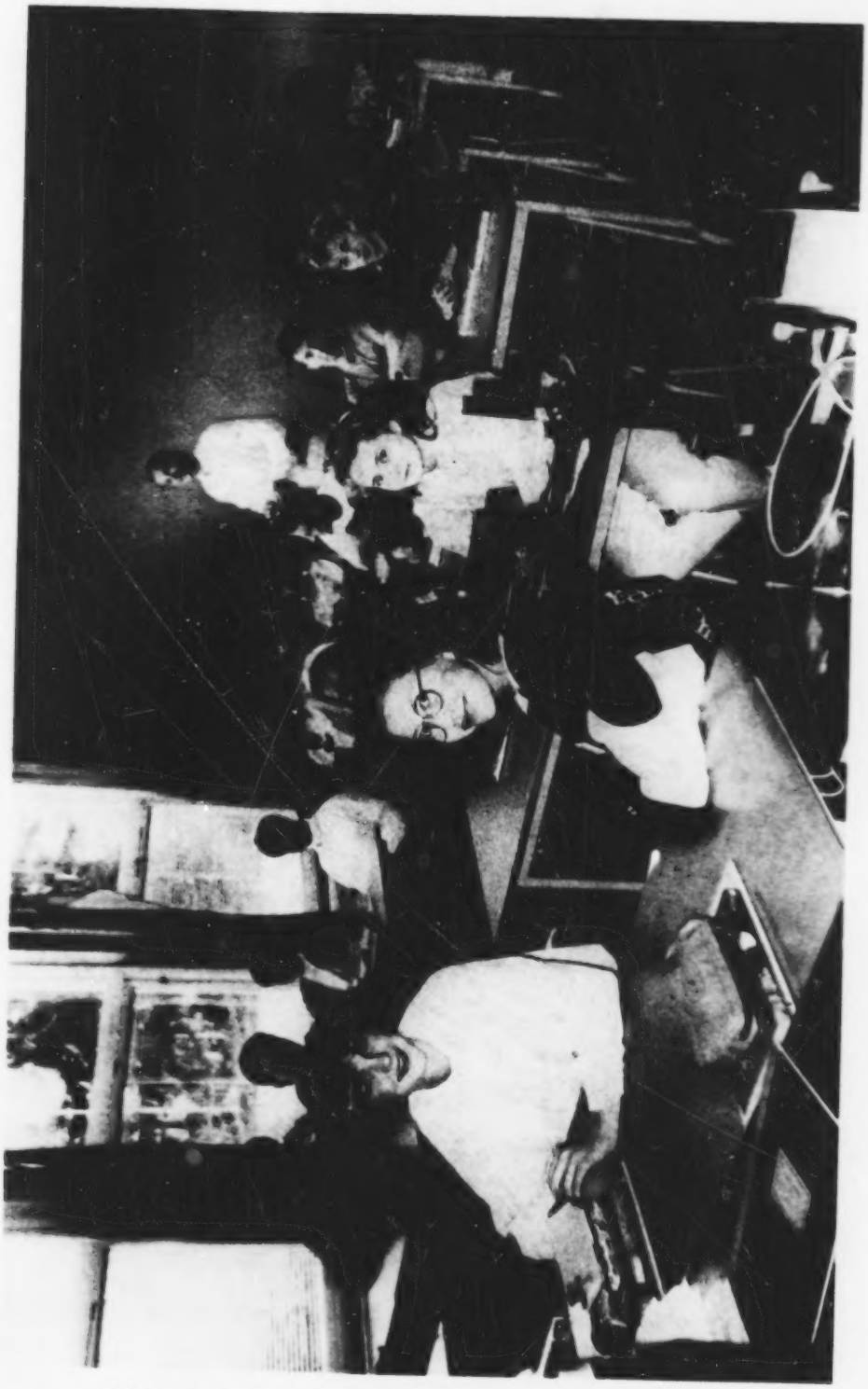
When you are 18-19 you graduate and take the 'student exam' (which is not a real examination, you simply get your grades that show your results during all the two-three years). By then you have spent about 1/4 of your life mainly going to school and now you are ready at last to 'begin life'. That is worth celebrating! So on graduation day, after a week of parties, games and decoration of the school, girls dress in white dresses and boys in white or light-coloured suits and we put on our white 'student caps'. In the morning, the photographer comes to the school then the students march in procession behind the Swedish flag and the school brass band through the town to the church for the graduation ceremony. After that there is a lunch for all the graduates and their class teachers, and later in the afternoon families and friends gather in the school yard and wait with flowers and big placards for the graduate students to come running out through the school doors for the last time, singing the 'Student song' whose opening words are 'Let's sing of the student's happy days ...' (composed by one of our present king's ancestors). Then the graduates ride through town in a procession of vehicles of the most varied kinds, there is a real carnival atmosphere! Then family celebrations follow, and a 'student ball'.

Apart from the summer holidays, we have a two-week holiday over Christmas and the New Year, one-week winter sports holiday in February, one week at Easter, and shorter holidays such as 1 May, Ascension Day (always a Thursday in May) and the following Friday, Whit Monday (in May or June) and the only holiday in the autumn: All Saints' Day (at the beginning of November).

In our leisure time, when we have done our homework, we spend a lot of time with our friends. Sometimes we go to discos, to the cinema, or watch a video at home. Sports such as football, which girls also play nowadays, are very popular as are volleyball, table tennis, tennis, handball, skiing, ice hockey and horse-riding. Sometimes during the year the whole school has a sports day or open-air day or culture day. Other welcome breaks in the school routine are concerts, the Lucia celebration of 13 December, project study days (when we all study the same subject), study visits and our school exchange programme with other countries. Alleskolan for example has an exchange programme with Estonia and Italy, Domarhagsskolan with Hungary and Stålhagsskolan with Latvia, Poland and Germany. Like many other Swedish schools, these three schools also have individual student exchanges with the United States and Australia.

A school for everybody

Since 1842, Sweden has had compulsory elementary schooling. The nine-year compulsory school was introduced in 1963. The Swedish school system rests on the principle of guaranteeing equivalent basic education to everybody, regardless of sex, place of residence, income or citizenship. Goals and guidelines are determined by the Riksdag (our parliament) and there is a national school administration to supervise and evaluate schools. Since school is compulsory it is financed by taxes, and there are very few private schools. Education is free, also at upper secondary school level and at universities and in adult education,



Welcome to the ASP School! Stålhagsskolan, in Hultsfred.

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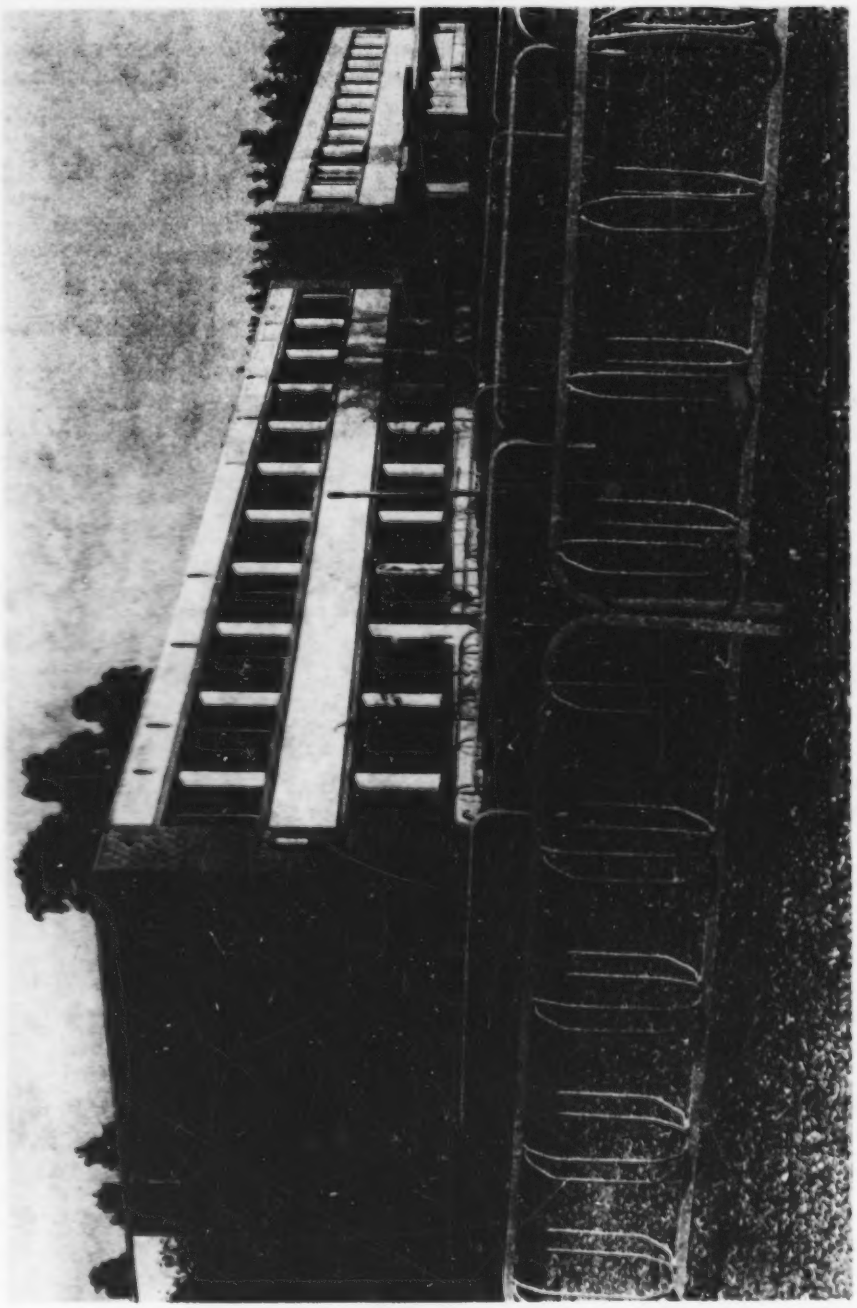

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A typical secondary school resting during summer holidays. Note the empty bicycle-stands! By courtesy of Torbjörn Svahn, Hultsfred.

there are no tuition fees. In the compulsory school and at the upper secondary level we get lunch, consisting of a hot meal, milk, bread and butter, books and material and free tickets for bus/train rides to school as well as free medical care, including dental care. Parents receive a monthly allowance for each child until the child is sixteen. After that the pupil gets a study allowance while at school.

Adult education is very common in Sweden. Municipal adult education was introduced in the 1960s to give adults access to the same education as the younger generation and also to provide opportunities for advanced vocational education. Often the adults go to the same school as the teenagers, but they have a different curriculum.

The Swedish school is supposed to foster democratic individuals, who can think for themselves and co-operate with others in a mature way. The pupils have regular meetings with their teachers and form a 'board' for the class, they often take notes, write minutes and have a chairperson, secretary and a person to check the minutes at these meetings, starting at a very young age!

'At last'. Eva Jonsson who graduated in 1991 from Stålhagsskolan yells out her joy when she finally leaves school. By courtesy of Victoria Fors, Hultsfred.

Timetable for Grade 8

Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8	Elective German/ French or other	Home Economics	Handicraft wood-metal-textile	Maths: special/ general	Sport
9	Pictorial studies (Art)			Physics or Biology	Swedish
10			Social studies		
11	Social studies: history/ religion Geogr.	English: special/ general	Swedish	Physics or Biology	Elective
12	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
13	English: special	Physics or Biol.	English: general		
		Chemistry or Physics	English: special	Sports	Class meeting Maths
14	Swedish	Biology or Chemistry	Maths: special/ general	Social studies: Hist/Geogr/ Religion	Social studies: Hist/ Geogr/ Religion
15	English general	Elective German/ French or other	Free Activities		

Elective: (1) German, (2) French, (3) 'Friskvård' (physical well-being), (4) 'Ord och bild' ('Words and images') e.g. Pictorial and Dramatic workshop, (5) Workshop, mechanics and economy.

Since the late 1960s pupils address their teachers, headmasters and other adults by their first names and the atmosphere in the classroom is often friendly, but there is still a long way to go before our school is really democratic and the pupils can have a say in the planning of the term's work for example. We need to practise having more responsibility. Progress still depends a lot on the individual teacher. But on the whole it is probably a lot better to go to school nowadays than in our parents' or grandparents' time.

Leisure

Sweden is a country with a lot of wilderness and forests, which makes it suitable for outdoor activities. We also have a unique right of access to private land, which allows us to go cross-country running and orienteering as much as we like. But it is not just sporting types that have this right of access - anyone living in or visiting Sweden can enjoy this right. You are allowed to pick wild berries, mushrooms and flowers (except for rare species). You can drink and fetch water from lakes and wells (we have lots of water, which in most cases is safe to drink). You can pick dead twigs and branches to light a fire - if the ground is not too dry. You can take your dog with you everywhere if you have it under control. You can swim in lakes but you cannot use private beaches. You are not allowed to leave litter, take twigs or branches from growing trees, pick nuts or take birch-bark, let your dog hunt on somebody's land if you do not have permission. You cannot fish in some lakes unless you have a permit. But you can fish without a permit in the heart of Stockholm City!

Working Swedes have the right to five weeks paid holidays a year. Some travel to their country cottages, others drive around Sweden or Europe with their caravans. Some holiday in their sailing or motor boats. Many people travel abroad. The Canary Islands off the coast of Spain have been a popular place for many years. In recent years biking holidays have become more popular in Sweden. Many of the bikers stay at youth hostels overnight.

In our spare time we teenagers like to become involved in sports. Football, ice-hockey, handball, volleyball, orienteering skiing, riding and gymnastics are some of the most popular ones. We might also belong to the scouts or an outdoor-life association, to a church association, a theatre group or attend a study-circle to learn new skills. We have many sporting facilities throughout the country and all of us have sports on the timetable at school. There are many competitions and different leagues for most sports. Some of us devote a lot of our spare time to training so that we can keep our place in a team. There are many national associations for the different sports and the government and local authorities give good grants to these organizations.

We asked ten-year old Michael what he does in his spare time:

'Quite a lot of things. I play and practise football, draw, play with my friends. I go to the cinema sometimes and when there is ice on the lakes I like to go skating.'

'What do you do when your mother is not at home?'

'I don't notice that because I go to a recreation centre where I can do lots of different things, for example play table tennis. We also have small bandy sticks so we divide into teams and play an indoor match.'

'Winter sports' a favourite pastime every winter in the north and once or twice every decade in the centre and south of Sweden where normally the winters are too mild. By courtesy of the Swedish Institute.

'Sleighing', LILJEFORS, Bruno (1860-1939). By courtesy of the National Museum, Stockholm.

V. Community life

Monuments

In Sweden we have enjoyed a time of peace for nearly 200 years. Therefore we have no large monuments of victories and no war memorials of the kind you find elsewhere in Europe.

One of the best known statues in Stockholm is 'Guds hand', the hand of God, at the Carl Milles Museum. The hand is God's power lifting the earthly being and showing the overwhelmed man the greatness of creation. The hand has bent fingers and is thus also the hand of a sculptor, who as an artist has the power to lift man and show him the spiritual world. The model for the hand was Carl Milles himself!

In Gothenburg - the second city in Sweden - everybody can see a statue at the top of a tower over the harbour. It is 'The sailor's wife' with a child on her arm. She is looking out over the water awaiting her husband's return.

Sundborn

As a 'national monument' for Sweden we would like to show you the home of the great painter Carl Larsson. He created together with his wife, Karin, a beautiful home in Sundborn, a little village in Dalarna (central Sweden).

In their time - the beginning of this century - a home like this was an Utopia for most families in Sweden. The pictures which Carl Larsson created in his home - the decorations and furniture created by his wife, who was also an artist - are among the most beloved paintings in Sweden. They really are the symbol of the good life for the Swedes! (See illustrations on pages 23 and 33.)

Museums

The best known museum is an open air museum in Stockholm called Skansen. There you can find buildings and milieux from all parts of Sweden. Manors, farmhouses, school buildings, a church, etc. that all reflect Swedish culture.

Skansen in Stockholm is the original Skansen. Similar museums have afterwards been created in many countries. Many of these have even borrowed the name Skansen.

From Skansen you can see another famous, but modern, museum; the Wasa museum. There you can see a vessel from the seventeenth century. This museum is very popular and a favourite for young visitors. Here there are a lot of video and computer techniques which visitors can use to gain better knowledge of the ship and the period of history.

'God's hand', MILLES, Carl (1875-1955). By courtesy of the Carl Milles Museum, Stockholm.

Industries

Agrarian Sweden, such as you can see it in the open air museum Skansen has now been transformed into a very modern industrial society. All over the world Swedish enterprises and their products are well known, as for example:

ABB:	electric equipment and railway equipment
Atlas Copco:	compressed air equipment
Ericson:	electronics
Saab:	cars, lorries, aeroplanes, electronics
SSAB:	steel
Stora:	wood, pulp and paper
Volvo:	cars, lorries, buses.

High quality has always been the trademark for these - and many more - Swedish products.

Political parties

We have a rather stable political climate in Sweden. Others may find it a bit dull, but the widespread consensus politics with regard to welfare goals is typical.

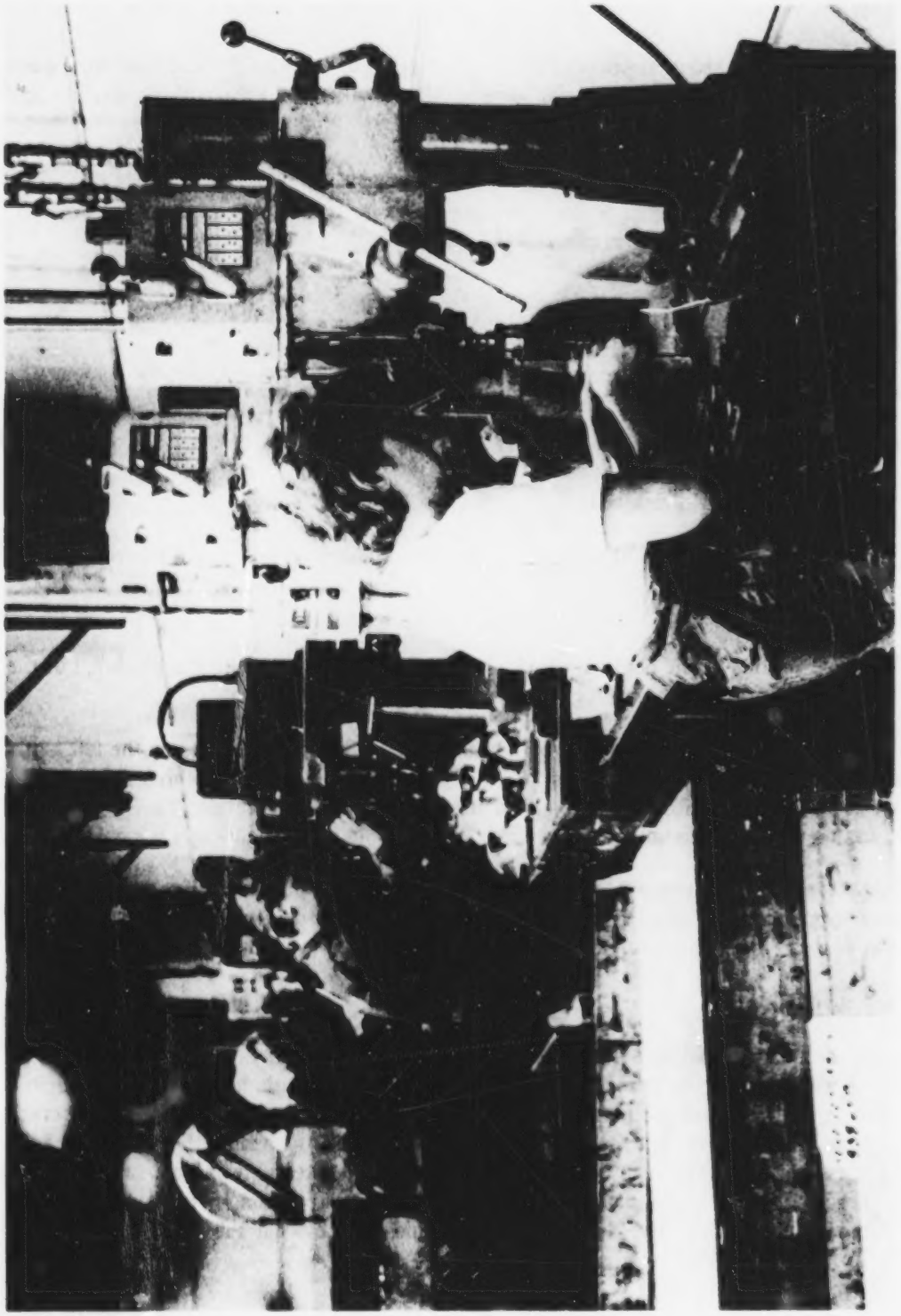
The parties that are represented in parliament are: the Social Democrats on the left wing, that have for many years been the largest party. On the right wing you find three non-socialist parties who have support from nearly half of the adult population. We also have some small parties, among them a communist party, a Christian party and a new right-right wing party.

In Sweden you can vote when you are 18. Young people in Sweden are not that much interested in politics, they often think politicians quarrel! In Sweden immigrants also have the right to vote in the local and country elections if they have been resident here for three years.

Popular movements

As a foundation of democratic life in Sweden you will find our popular movements which have fostered their members since the beginning of the twentieth century. To be united by an idea, to study in small groups and form associations meant that people learnt democracy and gained self-confidence. In the labour movement they learnt to handle the interests of the working class and gradually many of the members could take seats in parliament, and some even in the government. The temperance movement played a role in a society where alcohol was a big problem. In the free churches people could escape what they felt to be a great pressure from the State Church.

In these associations - and many similar ones - common people learnt how to speak, how to fulfil their tasks as a secretary, a chairman and so on. It made them able to take care of more difficult public functions.



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Mechanical works, Hultsfred. By courtesy of Torbjörn Svahn, Hultsfred, Hultsfred Pressgjuteri AB.

Humour in Sweden

The traditional Swedish funny story is about a stupid Norwegian (in Norway they have the same jokes about stupid Swedes!), a normal Swede - or some other nationality - and Bellman. Carl Michael Bellman was a poet and a bard, who lived in Sweden (1740-1795). His songs about life, love and drinking live on and so does his reputation about being smart, sly and having an answer to everything (and naturally being the best/worst):

> There was a Norwegian and a German and Bellman who competed in swimming across a lake. The Norwegian swam first but had to give up after a while. Then the German's turn came and he also had to give up before reaching the other side. When it came to Bellman's turn he swam very quickly - he had just a few strokes left when he said to himself 'I think I'll turn back!'.

Another common joke is about different sorts of people from various regions in the country:

> The people from Norrland who judge a person according to the horsepower of his snow scooter.
>
> The people from Stockholm who put down everyone who does not find his way to the underground.
>
> The people from Skåne who love food above anything else and can never get enough yellow pea soup, and who put their false teeth into a glass of beer overnight.
>
> The people from Gothenburg who will never accept the existence of Stockholm.
>
> The people from the lower class who tattoo their children so that they can identify them.
>
> The upper class snob who mourns his Rolex watch when he has lost his arm.
>
> The ... well, let's stop there before the list gets too long!

Swedish humour can be rather nasty. Swedes like to make fun of people and if somebody makes a fool of himself it is highly appreciated. This might be a sign of what we refer to as the well-known Swedish envy.

Other things Swedes make fun of are: alcohol and drunkenness, marriage, infidelity, children's lack of understanding, sex, famous persons and sometimes even themselves!

Favourites

Favourite foods

Potatoes are an important part of our basic diet. We like to grow them in our gardens and we often eat meat, fish or sausage with them. Water and milk are commonly served at mealtimes. On special occasions grown-ups drink wine or other alcoholic drinks.

We normally have three meals a day. Breakfast can consist of coffee, tea or milk. Some people eat cultured milk, called 'filmjölk', which tastes sour, together with some cereals. Lunch and dinner vary from family to family. Some people have a big lunch and others a big dinner.

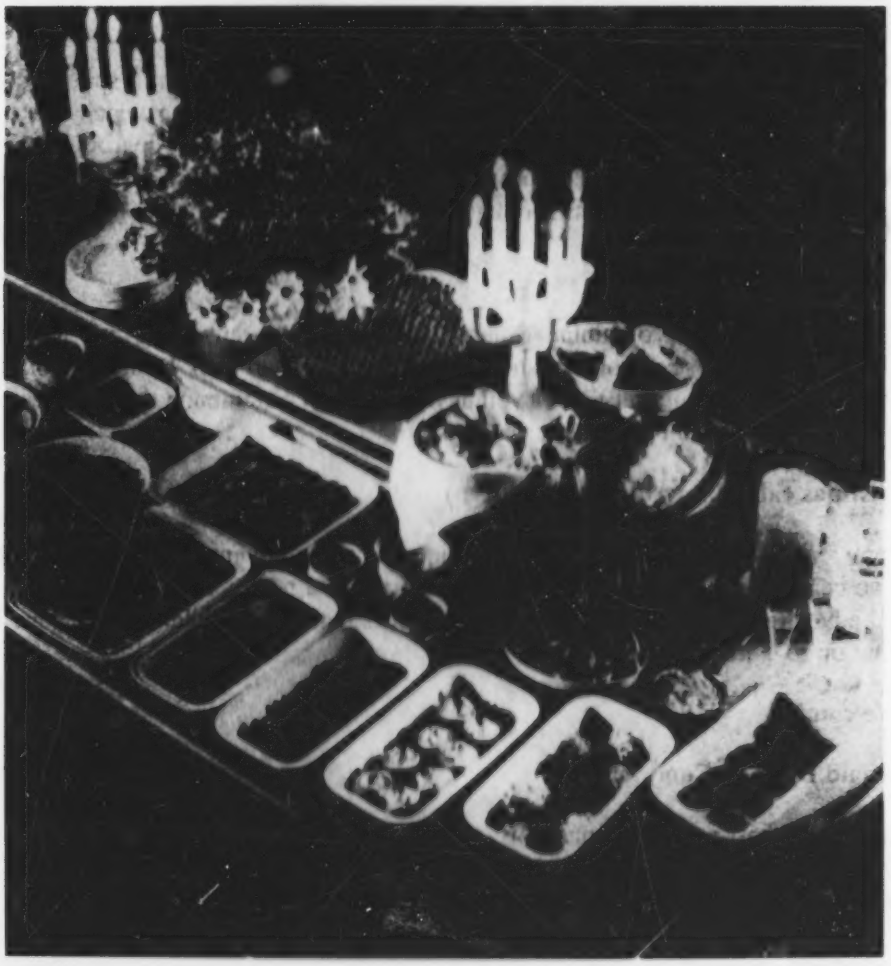
There are many restaurants in Sweden and we have grown to like foods from other countries, not least 'fast-foods' like pizzas, hamburgers and kebabs. We also love macaroni and spaghetti. In school our meals are free and the most popular dishes are meatballs, pancakes, hamburgers and spaghetti bolognese (minced meat sauce). Rice pudding is also very popular.

All the food we buy is available in supermarkets. We always have fresh food. The dairies provide us with cheese, milk and butter. Vegetables and fruit are available all year round because we import them from other countries. We have a lot of varieties of bread, among them a hard bread called crisp bread. Some people bake their own bread but most people buy it in stores.

Here is the recipe for meatballs. For 2 persons.

Ingredients: 1.5 tbsp. (tablespoon) bread crumbs, 3/4 dl milk, half an onion, 150 g minced meat (beef), half a teaspoon salt, a pinch of white pepper, half an egg (optional).

Mix the milk and the bread crumbs. Allow the mixture to stand for 10 minutes. Peel, slice and cut the onion into very tiny pieces. Add the minced meat, salt, pepper and egg. Mix well with a wooden spoon until the mixture is smooth. Place the mixture on a cutting board that has been rinsed in water. Form the meatballs. Melt 1 tbsp. of margarine in a frying pan. Place the meatballs in the pan and fry until brown. Lower the heat so they will be fried thoroughly and gently. Fry 3-5 minutes, depending on size. To make the sauce: pour 1 dl of water into the frying pan after the meatballs have been fried.



'Smörgåsbord' the famous Swedish buffet - with hot and cold dishes, bread, desserts, etc. Very common during Christmas and New Year. By courtesy of the Swedish Institute.

Clothes

Young people buy quite a lot of clothes partly because of the changes in climate but also because we like to follow the trends and fashions. Most of us are slaves to fashion in one way or another. We are influenced by advertising and often buy specific brands of clothing, for example jeans. We do not have a school uniform so we can dress as we like to school. There is not that great a difference between the way boys and girls dress. The favourite outfit is probably a pair of jeans and a sweater. We also have traditional folk costumes that vary from region to region. Those of us who have one usually wear it on special occasions such as mid-summer.

Favourite television programmes

Discussion programmes are fairly common but do not have many teenage viewers. The most well-known programme nowadays is called 'Svar direkt' (Answer directly) in which different subjects are discussed each week in a studio with a live audience.

Entertainment programmes

There are naturally a lot of entertainment programmes in Swedish in spite of the threat from international satellite channels. We laugh at a film or a series in which we recognize ourselves - for example typical things we do when on holiday in the Alps or in Mallorca in Spain. We also have stand-up comedy programmes that are popular, in which a single person stands up and tells jokes more or less spontaneously.

Programmes for teenagers

Many of us like the programme 'Bullen' which takes up many things we wonder about such as love, friendship, sex, violence and alcohol. You can write to 'Bullen' if you have got any problems and then a specialist gives you advice. In each programme there is a competition and an interview with a famous group or person.

The Christmas calendar (Adventskalendern)

From 1 to 24 December Swedish television shows an adventure series every year with one or two celebrities in the main roles. Each day there is a new episode related to a specially illustrated advent calendar with small perforated doors that young children open, one for each day leading up to Christmas.

Favourite comics

Donald Duck & Company

This is the most popular comic in Sweden. It does not really matter how old you are - everybody likes Donald Duck. There are stories about him and his duck relatives and friends. You follow their pranks and their daily life.

Bamse

He is the favourite of small children. He is a little bear who is kind to everyone. When he is in trouble he just eats a jar with super honey from his grandmother and then becomes very strong and solves conflicts. His two best friends are Lille Skutt and Skalman. Lille Skutt is a small scared rabbit and Skalman is a tortoise who always does things very slowly, but he has many brilliant ideas.

Garfield

Garfield, also called Gustaf in Sweden, is a very fat cat who does not care about others. He only loves two things in life - lasagna and himself. He lives with his master and a dog whom he is very mean to. Garfield is one of the most widely read comics in Sweden. He is popular with all ages.

Music we listen to

A lot of Swedish teenagers enjoy listening to all sorts of modern music, some also like classical music. Our radio stations play music from early morning until midnight and this is where you can hear new songs and records. If you find a record really interesting the easiest way of getting hold of it is to buy one at a record shop.

We don't just listen to music. A large number of people make and play their own music either in local music groups or at the municipal music school. You can choose from instruments such as the violin, the piano, trumpet, accordion and many more. You pay a fee for the lessons. Everyone usually learns to play the recorder at the age of 9 or 10. After that some pupils choose other instruments but most of us become mainly consumers of music. Our tastes are wide and vary from person to person.

Foreign music

Our radio stations play a lot of international music as well as Swedish and the foreign artists are the most popular. We receive international music mainly from America and Great Britain. Artists like Madonna and George Michael are two well-known names here. U 2 from Ireland and the American group Bon Jovie are often in the Swedish pop charts.

Swedish music

When a well-known Swedish artist releases a new album it is often eagerly awaited. It is hard for Swedes to make an international breakthrough, so most of them sing in English, which is well received by the public. Here is a short list of Swedish artists and groups:

Joakim Thåström: a rebel who sings in Swedish. His music criticizes Swedish society. His sound is between punk and rock.

Lena Philipsson: a singer who uses English lyrics in her pop songs. She dresses in a very provocative way and she has several times been chosen as Sweden's most sexy woman.

Roxette: our biggest music export commodity since ABBA. They made a name for themselves in Sweden five years ago, but two years ago they were number one on the US list with the hit 'The Look'. The duo, Marie Fredriksson and Per Gessle, have once again succeeded with a new song 'Joyride'.

Orup: He is a very popular Swedish singer, with an original music style. He has released several good records and the song 'I'd rather be chased by wolves, than loved by you' is one of his most well-known hits.

Europe: The group became very popular after releasing their premier album, 'Wings of change', and their second record contains their huge hit 'The Final Countdown', which topped the charts all over Europe. It also made number one in the United States. (Unfortunately their third record did not do as well as the earlier albums.)

Favourite movies

The Swedish cinemas are dominated by foreign movies. The American film industry is the major supplier to our screens. In spite of foreign domination it is actually the national movies which are the most popular. But, it is so expensive to produce Swedish movies today, so it is only a few times a year we can enjoy a new national movie. When a new movie is released everyone wants to see it, partly out of curiosity, but also to support the future production of national movies.

Here are some of the Swedish movies made over the years:

Fanny och Alexander is a very well-known movie, produced by Ingmar Bergman. It tells about his own childhood, living together with his grandmother Anna. The story takes place in 1907 and is a typical Bergman movie. It has been seen by many and was very well received by the audience.

1939 is a title that probably says it all. This movie takes us on a trip back in time to the conditions in Sweden during the Second World War. '1939' is the most expensive film made in Swedish movie history so far.

Mitt liv som hund (My life as a dog) tells the story of a boy who lives a rather normal life. It describes from a child's point of view everyday life in Sweden in the middle of the century. That is probably the reason why it has become so popular. Historical films have been common in Swedish movie production during the last decade.

Jönssoonligan (The Jönsson gang) consists of three famous Swedish characters and they have made six films together. The plot is very simple and entertaining. It is a typical Swedish kind of comedy, where three men with spectacular and very original methods plan big burglaries and somehow they always succeed.

Sällskapsresan (The get-together cruise). A Swede in Sweden is often very anonymous, but when he finds himself outside our borders, he becomes another person. Even the most dull person finds himself quite charming. There are three movies in this series and they describe the typical Swede on holiday where things happen that they have not even dreamt of in their wildest dreams. The get-together cruises are probably the best comedies ever produced in Sweden.

Favourite Swedish authors

Vilhelm Moberg (1898-1973)

He was a very good writer and dramatist, famous for his books about ordinary people in Sweden during different historical periods. His book 'Raskens' is about a soldier in the nineteenth century. We should also note his novels 'The Emigrants' and 'The Immigrants' about Swedish people who moved to the United States in the 1850s.

August Strindberg (1849-1920)

He is our most famous dramatist and novelist. He was also a talented painter. His novel 'The people of Hemsö' describes the life of people in the Stockholm archipelago. Some of his novels are autobiographical as for example 'The Son of a Servant'. One of Strindberg's most well-known plays is 'Miss Julie'.

Margit Sandemo (1922-)

She was actually born in Norway but grew up in Sweden. One of her novels is a sequence of 47 books called 'The Story of the Ice People'. It was a big success in Scandinavia. You follow the fate of a family in the eternal struggle between good and evil. Her books are full of imagination, romance and excitement.

Favourite Swedish painters

Anders Zorn (1860-1920)

He is internationally famed as one of the best portrait painters in Europe in the nineteenth century. He was born in Mora but studied abroad. He was also fond of impressionistic landscapes and made portraits of ordinary women who lived in his native town. He showed an interest in folk music and started the tradition of fiddlers' gatherings (Sw. 'spelmansstämma') when folk fiddlers compete in playing traditional folk dance tunes. Today there are special Zorn medals awarded to competent fiddlers.

Carl Larsson (1853-1919)

He is one of Scandinavia's most popular painters known for his idyllic depictions of his home and life at Little Hyttnäs, Sundborn, Dalarna.

Favourite foreign authors

Stephen King

He is one of the best-selling authors specializing in horror-thrillers which are often about other worlds and things that only exist in the imagination.

Jackie Collins

She is famous for her books about life in Hollywood. She writes about how the stars do anything to get what they want. She is both loved and hated for her books. Public libraries do not buy her books but they are available in bookshops.

Favourite sweets

We eat a lot of sweets in Sweden. Children get pocket-money which they use to buy all kinds of sweets. At Christmas we make special toffee and chocolate sweets. Many of us are a little overweight because of our fondness for sweets. We also love soft drinks and ice cream. There are many flavours to choose from.

VI. World concerns and the future

World concerns

The pollution of the environment concerns us a great deal - from acid rain to destruction of the ozone layer. We think some of the problems could be addressed if the following was done:

Give money to poorer countries so that they can build plants for their industries, and provide technical information freely and generously.

All oil tankers should have at least two hulls, to prevent oil from gushing out in a collision.

There should be harsher laws and good law enforcement against pollution of the air and the water in seas, rivers and lakes.

School classes and others could buy areas of rain forest to prevent the forest from being cut down. Or the United Nations could put pressure on the multinational companies to make them stop the devastation of the rain forest before it is too late. The rain forests are our main oxygen supplier - if we go on cutting them down they will all be gone by the year 2010 and how can we breathe then?

People should join environmental organizations.

Consumers should buy products that do not harm the environment.

It is also of great concern to us that a majority of the world's population lack some of the basic necessities of life, such as food, water, a safe home and medical care. We think that - unfortunately - the gap between the developing countries and the industrial countries will increase for yet some time. The poor will get poorer, trade communities will drive hard bargains with the developing countries who are not members. In the industrial countries the social gap will probably increase as well, on account of rising unemployment. With greater social gaps, there will be more unrest in the world, and more refugees.

Some of the following measures might improve the situation for millions of people:

Instead of burning surplus grain in the industrial countries, it should be sent to areas where famine exists.

Better farming methods should be taught where that is needed.

Land ownership laws should be changed to spread the ownership to more people.

Surplus foodstuffs should be sent to neighbouring countries, e.g. for us right now: Eastern Europe.

The planting of trees on a mass scale may prevent the erosion of the top soil and may create more arable land that can feed more people.

Wherever there is shortage of water and the countries cannot afford the expense of digging wells, desalinating sea water should be encouraged. Richer countries must help finance it through the United Nations.

The developing countries should be given a greater share in the profits which are made in these countries by multinational enterprises.

All people in the world should be provided with thorough information about contraception and child care, and contraceptives should be free and easily available for all.

Breaches of human rights are the cause of much suffering and often lead to refugee-producing situations.

The development of democratic organizations and structures and multiparty systems could lead to a greater respect for basic human rights.

Aid given to developing countries could be made conditional on respect for basic human rights.

International courts could be organized by the United Nations, like the one in Nuremberg in 1946. The United Nations should be given more power to put pressure on dictators and tyrants who violate the human rights of their own people.

Here in Sweden more people could join the human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and help guard against breaches of human rights.

In the future people will move around even more than today, bringing a new culture to the country they come to. Different cultures will be mixed and many new cultures will arise. It will take a long time before discrimination will disappear everywhere, but the sooner we learn to live together, the sooner we can start to work with the real problems and solve them, creating a better life for us all!

The future

Swedish youth about problems in their own society

Young people are worried about unemployment. They think that there will be difficulties for people with no education to even get a job. They are also worried about the gap in society between rich and poor, and they are concerned that the gap will increase. Young people in Sweden are also worried about the concentration of power to those who already have it. Furthermore the situation of Swedish farmers is of great concern. What will happen with the environment, e.g. the landscape, if the farmers are forced to produce less than today?

We are really worried about environmental problems. Where we live there are beautiful lakes, woods and fields and a lot of animals. We are lucky because our nature has not been damaged as much as that of many other countries. But trees die here too, and many of our lakes and coastal waters are without life.

The ozone layer is getting thinner and if this continues it may soon be dangerous to live here in northern Europe. If we go on destroying our world like this, for how long will it be liveable? If this is to be a planet with plants, animals and human life we must do something now before it is too late. We owe this to those who will come after us. Think what it would have been like if our ancestors had ruined our chances of survival on this planet!

Swedish youth about the future of the world

A lot of Swedish youngsters believe that we are facing some rough years, but they are also convinced that the tide will turn for the better in a few years time. They expect a more natural balance of power between the super powers of the world, and they expect Europe to maintain peace, especially within the fields of politics and trade. Some express their fear of yet another war in the Middle East, a war with religion as the excuse. Swedish youth hope that the concern for the environment will increase. They want the rich 'developed' countries to assist the 'poor' countries to a greater extent than today when dealing with questions of pollution.

As long as most people on earth live in want of the bare necessities of life, and the world is like a huge military arsenal, it is not possible to pretend that all is well.

Swedish youth about science and technology in the future

Continued research in science and technology will lead to new discoveries of alternative sources of energy, but before that - and before all countries have got stricter laws on pollution of soil, air and water - things will probably get worse.

There is a lot of hope and belief in finding solutions to medical problems, and they expect cures for cancer and AIDS to be discovered. Science will also be of great help when it comes to solving the environmental problems. They see great pressure for this when public opinion grows in favour of our single planet. Swedish youth believe that it is of utmost importance to deal with environmental problems, this is their top priority.

If there is a 'hothouse effect' of rising temperature, as some scientists predict, the sea level will rise and cover vast areas of land on all continents. But we think it can be avoided, if we act now.

Swedish youth's hopes and aspirations for the future ...

Most of us feel confident that there will be a place for us in society when we are adults and that we will be able to have a nice home and family and a job that can give us personal development. We expect to go out and work - both men and women. Probably we will have two children. When we retire we expect to get a pension to live on and when we are really old, to be placed in a home for old people, where we will be taken care of. But that is a long time from now! If this sounds dull - well it is not! Life is full of things and experiences, and lots of things to do together with others. But all this happy living is threatened by problems in the world; problems that must be solved.

The majority want to live in the countryside. But comfort and closeness to work will keep bringing people to the cities.

My personal future

'I have a dream and that is to become a choreographer or to act and dance in musicals, but as I said it's only a dream. I hope to move to Stockholm or Gothenburg because I love the inner-city way of life. My Mum and Dad want me to stay in my home town, move in with my boyfriend, work in a bank and have as many kids as possible in as short a time as possible. Not exactly what I had in mind. But I don't know - I hope for the best. Jenny, 17'.

'After having worked in different countries like Spain, Germany and England my husband and I have finally settled down in the United States. We live in an old-fashioned house outside

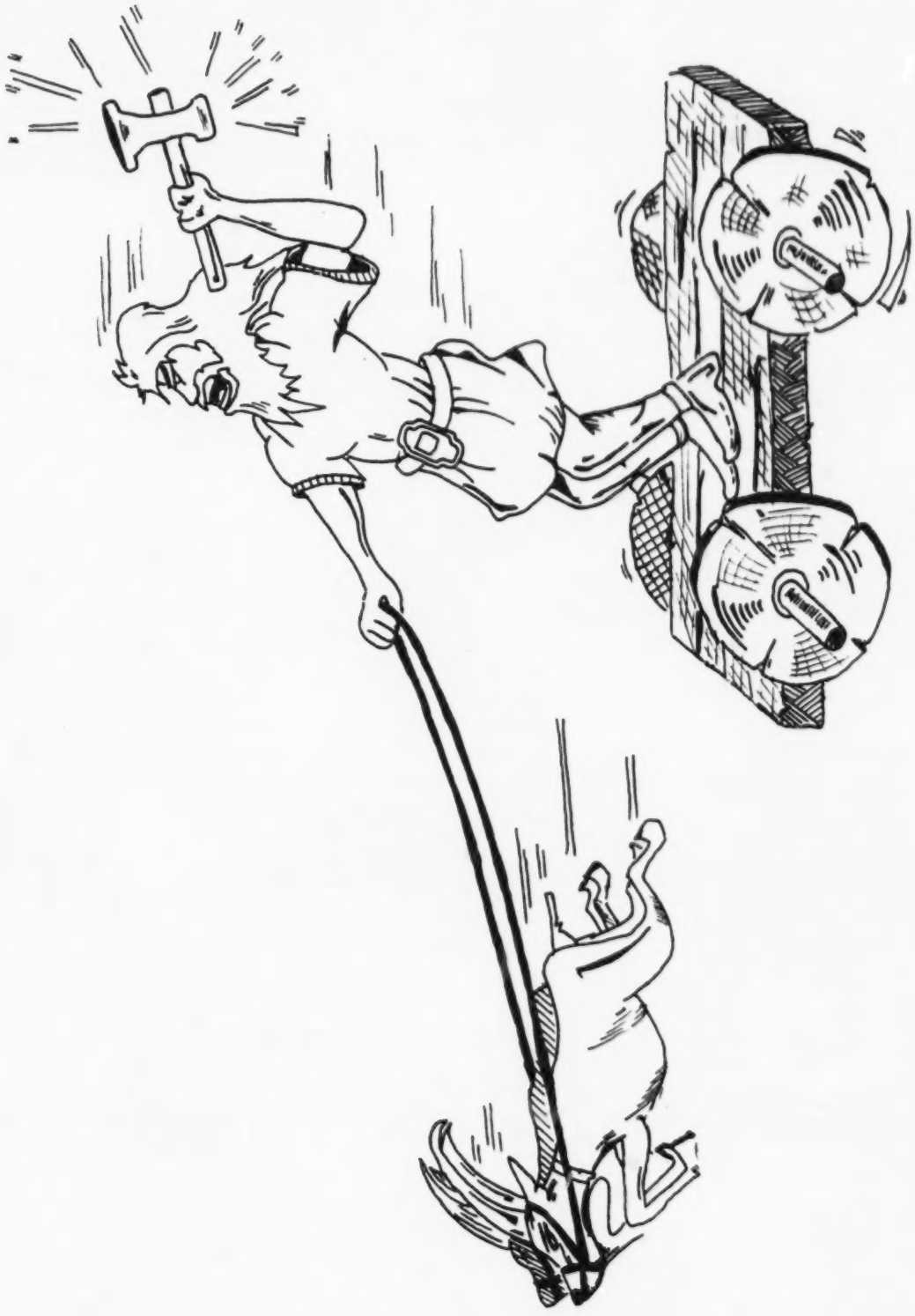
town. We have a big garden with lots of flowers and apple trees. We also have pets - two or three dogs, some cats and a horse. I have a job in which I can make good use of my knowledge of languages. I'll either be a translator or a bank clerk. My husband, who is a businessman, owns his own firm. Neither of us likes cleaning so we have a domestic help who comes twice a week. We are both very fond of children and we have planned to have children in the immediate future. Petra, 17'.

'After finishing school I'll either continue studying or start working. I would like to study tourism and work at a tourist agency or maybe work in another country as a guide. I would also like to open my own clothes shop or maybe work as a journalist with a well-known magazine. But first of all when I leave school I want to start travelling, to see places I have just read about in books or seen on television - New York, Australia and Thailand for example. Then I'll return to Sweden, find my dream job, get married and live an ordinary life with my husband and two children. Lotte, 17'.

'My future is dark as the darkest night. I will quit school, get a job, work nine to five every day. My job will probably be boring too. When I have worked a few years I will probably get into this family life. It's not that I don't like children but once you've got there you are stuck for the next 20 years. Is that what life is supposed to be? I want to go to university but I know I won't. When I have worked 40 years I will get my pension and then die after a while. Anonymous'.

'In my dreams I can see myself as a 27-year old star in athletics or volleyball. If my dreams come true I can see myself working with sports, maybe as a teacher at a school. When I finish school I'm not sure whether I want to go on studying economics. I think I would be happy to be able to combine my studies and training - to work as an economist and go in for sports at the same time. I want to get married before I'm 30 and have children straightaway. I want two children - a boy and a girl. I hope to live in a manor house in the country. In my dreams I can see no wars exist. There is only peace in the world. A lot has been done to prevent pollution. I hope these things will not just be dreams. Maria, 17'.

'My name is Christian and I live in a small community in the south of Sweden with my mother and father and my little sister. I am in my first year at the technical line of the upper secondary school. My dream is to become an officer in the Royal Swedish Air Force. It is very difficult to be accepted at the air force school, but one can apply twice a year until one is 22 years old, so I will keep on trying. I would also like to have a wife and one or two children and a house out in the country with apple trees, flowers, and a dog running in the garden to meet me when I come home from work. I don't know if these future plans are ever going to come true, but I really hope they will some day. Christian, 17'.



'Thor riding across the sky', by LINDQVIST, Mattias, student at the ASP School Domarhagsskolan, Avesta.

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Appendix

Swedish myths

In former times people in the north believed in many gods. They told stories about them. Those stories are called myths.

The creation of the world

The story begins like this:

'No sand was, no sea
no cool waves.

Earth didn't exist
and no heaven.

The yawning chasm existed
but no grass'.

The giants

The yawning chasm was called 'Ginnungagap'. It was situated between 'Nifelhem', the country of ice and cold in the north, and the warm 'Muspelhem' in the south. When the ice from the north was mixed with the sparkles of fire from 'Muspelhem' in the south, it melted and life rose from the drops. That is how the giant Ymer came into being.

Ymer sweated when he was sleeping. From the sweat in his left armpit a man and a woman grew into being. Ymer's right foot gave birth to a son together with his left foot. Later the son became the father of horrible giants who quickly filled the earth. From the hoar frost melting in the 'Ginnungagap' a cow was formed. Ymer was fed by the cow's milk.

The gods and the world are created

The cow got her food by licking stones covered with hoar frost. Out of the stone emerged the head, and gradually, an entire man. The man was Bure. His son fathered three sons, the Asa gods Oden, Vile and Ve. When they had grown up they killed Ymer. From his body they created the world. Ymer's flesh was the land. His blood, which ran in wild streams, turned into seas and rivers. His hair became forests. The sky was created from Ymer's skull and the clouds formed his brain. The clouds were as cold and cruel as the giant's thoughts.

The sparkles which went swirling out of Muspelhem were sent by the three Asa gods into space in order to shine and gleam upon the earth. Ymer's eyebrows were the mountains around Midgård (the centre). The mountains were put up to protect Midgård from the giants. Midgård, which was situated at the centre of the world, was later to become the home of the human beings. In Asgård lived the gods. From Asgård there was a bridge to the earth. Sometimes the human beings could see the bridge - the rainbow.

The first people

One day the gods were walking along the beach. There they found two tree trunks. The gods made these trunks into two persons. They called the man Ask and the woman Embla. From this couple originated all people in Midgård.

The gods in the north

Oden was the oldest and the most powerful of the gods. His house was called 'Valhall'. Oden's horse had eight legs, so Oden was never tired when he rode. He also had two ravens - Hugin and Munin. They flew all over the world and snatched up news. Then they whispered them in Oden's ear.

Frej was the god of fertility who ruled over sun and rain. He travelled in a wagon after the boar Gyllenborst (Goldenbrush) which could run both in the air and on water. Freja was Frej's sister. She was also the goddess of love. People turned to Freja especially when they were going to give birth to children.

Tor was the strongest of the gods and he was Oden's son. He had a big hammer - Mjölner - with which he killed the giants. When Tor threw the hammer it always hit its target! Tor often drove with his two he-goats. When he did so the sky trembled and flashed. The human beings could see and hear it: thunder and lightning.

Ragnarök

In the Nordic mythology Ragnarök is the great catastrophe when the gods and the people's world collapses. But this will not happen suddenly. Ragnarök is quite a long process. The people will first experience a world war that will be followed by three years of conflicts and fights between all countries in the world. There will also be conflicts between people, brother will kill brother, father will kill his son. Nobody will show mercy to others.

Immediately after the wars the Fimbul winter will follow. The Fimbul winter is three winters after each other without summers between. The people call upon their gods in heaven, but in vain. The next sign will be that the earth will begin to shake, the woods will be pulled up by the roots and the rocks will fly to pieces. When the crust of the earth bursts, the Fenris wolf comes loose ... .

The big Midgård snake will furiously trundle out of the ocean. His movements are so violent that they cause a large tidal wave that sweeps over Midgård.

At the peak of the turmoil the sky will crack and through the opening the giant fire-riders from Muspelhem come. They are on their way to the great Vigrid plain. The Fenris wolf and the Midgård snake also arrive at Vigrid. There you also find the damned men from the kingdom of death and the giants from the mountains and the ice. There they prepare themselves and wait for the fight between them and the gods.

Oden is informed of what is happening and throws himself up on Sleipners back and rides as fast as possible to Mimer's sacred spring to pray for advice. But all in vain, because this time nobody gives advice to Oden.

In Valhall the combatants gather and they ride together to the Virgid plain with Oden at their head. Tor's carriage thunders on at Oden's right side and Frej, Tyr and Heimdal are at his other side. Behind them rides Vidar, Oden's son. Then the others arrive. Oden's arch enemy is

the Fenris wolf. When Oden attacks, that terrible monster opens his mouth which is a bottomless hole. Tor fights to save his father Oden, but in vain. He tries to blow his hammer but is choked by the breath of the Fenris wolf and falls down dead.

But Oden gets his revenge through his son Vidar, who has a remarkable shoe. He puts the shoe on the wolf's lower jaw and with his hands he grabs his nose and tears him to pieces.

The struggle goes on and soon only Frej is left to fight with the fire giant Surt. But this struggle is unfair. Long ago Frej gave away his sword for love and therefore he has to fight empty handed with Surt, and thus loses.

The battle is over and Surt swings his flaming sword in triumph over heaven and earth, and everything disappears in smoke and darkness. At last everything is at the beginning - chaos and nothing.

When the battle has come to an end the earth will rise from the sea and be reborn. The corn in the fields will sway though it has never been sown. The streams will rush down the mountains and the birds sing as never before. Life will have the fortune to go on and a new human race will replenish the earth

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